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Lesson 92

You've learned how to use a few basic techniques and concepts of Baduk in practice through life-and-death problems. The "false eye" is another concept better learned through life-and-death problems. Two separate eyes are vital for the life of a group of stones. Therefore, if you can destroy one of the two, it would be the simplest way to rob the life of your opponent.

False Eye

Diagram 1 The white group here looks safe because it occupies quite a large area in the corner. However, no matter how big the territory a group has, it cannot live without two eyes.

Diagram 2 It is pretty simple for Black to kill the white group. The key point is to make the x-marked point a false eye, which is accomplished by the two black stones, Black 1 and the Δ -marked stone. Since there are many cases where you can make your opponent's eye false by taking up these two diagonally positioned points as shown here, please remember them.

Diagram 3 This problem is a little bit harder than the previous one to solve. However, the key is the same.

Diagram 4 The answer is Black 1 and 3. This problem is difficult owing to Black 3, which doesn't save the two stones in atari, but only adds one more to the number of victims. The exciting part is that White cannot make an eye even by capturing the three black stones.

Diagram 5 As you may already know, to capture the three stones with 1 doesn't improve White's situation, because Black can counter-capture White 1 with 2. Black 2 and the Δ -marked stone cooperate in making the x-marked point false.

Diagram 6 Do you remember me mentioning that the technique for putting your opponent in self-atari is very often used in solving life-and-death problems? Here, you have a chance to practice it. Of course, the ultimate goal is to make White's eye false.

Diagram 7 Black 1 is the only move Black can start with. If he plays otherwise, White can easily make two separate eyes by capturing with 1. However, Black 3 is wrong so that White succeeds in living by naturally answering with 2 and 4 and making a dual life position.

Diagram 8 Black 1 is the key move in this situation. Owing to this move, White cannot help but capture with 2 and let Black make his eye false with 3. You can see that White cannot connect at 3 against Black 2, because it leads him to a self-atari.

Diagram 9 This is the most difficult problem in this lesson. However, the goal of Black is clear enough. White already has one perfect eye in the corner and Black should prohibit White from making another one on the side.

Diagram 10 Black 1, attaching from the first line, is a very often used tactic to eliminate an eye shape of the opponent. You can see that Black 5 makes White's eye false.

Diagram 11 White can make the sequence a little more complicated with 4 against Black 3. However, then, Black 7 is a good move making White's eye false. When White captures the two black stones with 8, Black comes in at 7 again. Please verify this yourself.

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The writer is a baduk professor at Myongji University and a professional player of the game.

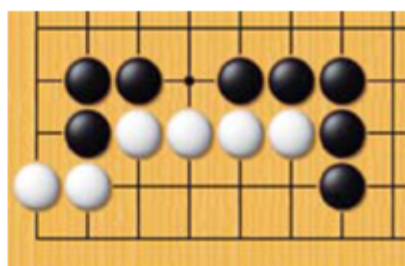


Diagram 1

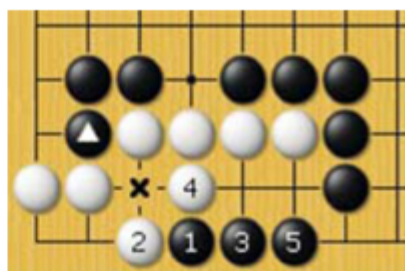


Diagram 2

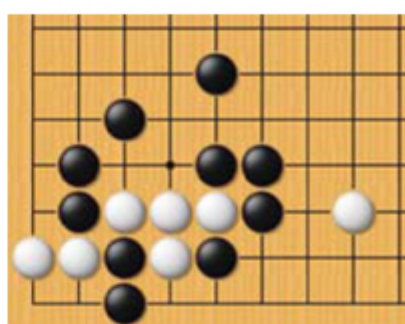


Diagram 3

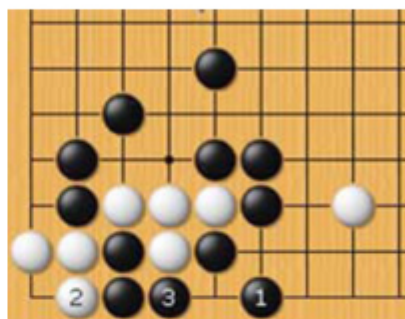


Diagram 4

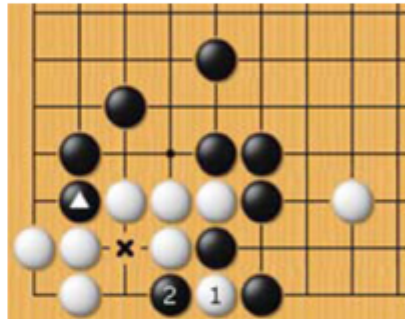


Diagram 5

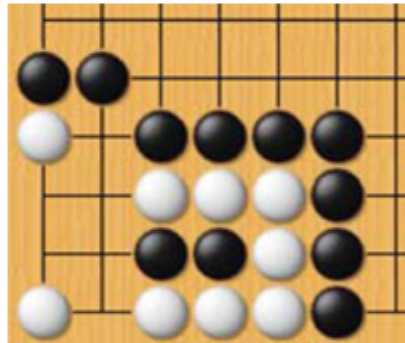


Diagram 6

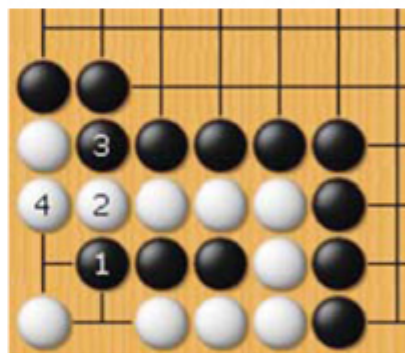


Diagram 7

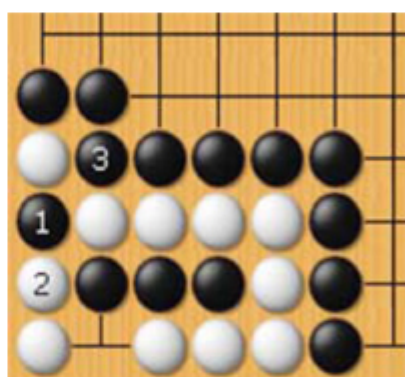


Diagram 8

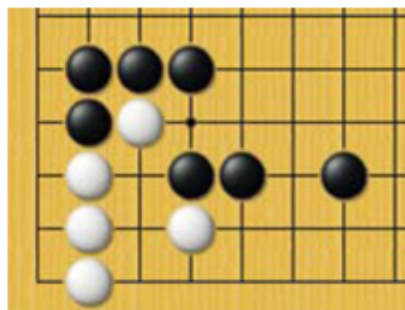


Diagram 9

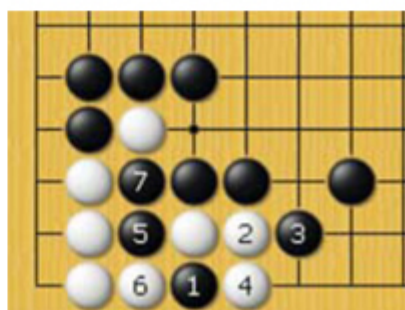


Diagram 10



Diagram 11

Lesson 93

An observer gets eight more points than the players _ this is a well-known baduk proverb meaning that a person who is watching a game can make more precise and reasonable decisions than the actual player. This is not surprising at all, and you probably had similar experiences in everyday life. For instance, two people fighting each other cannot admit the fact that either of them may be wrong, while the spectators usually feel that both are in the wrong anyway. Two people in love often cannot see each other's shortcomings, while their friends worry on their behalf.

Why the people playing a game themselves cannot judge the situation as it is, or take the proper action, it is very likely caused by their desire to win. This doesn't mean that you simply want a victory. It may be easier to calm down and play cautiously if your only goal is to win the game at the end. However, when you play, you want to win, not only the game itself, but also in the individual situations that arise. In order to feel that they are winning in every moment and situation, people play risky moves and sometimes miss very simple points.

To be more objective, a professional often stands up from his seat and looks at the board from his opponent's perspective during a game. Some of them ask for the game record being kept at the side to be read back to them, to follow the sequence of moves with a detached attitude. Such methods for cooling one's head are definitely helpful for players, preventing them from becoming too focused on one local position or a specific attempt.

Nevertheless, as all other aspects in baduk, and in life, the detached attitude is not always beneficial. I, as a professional player, participate in the reviewing gallery of important professional tournaments every so often. In a separate room prepared for the gallery, a group of professionals review and critique the game in progress in another room as it is being played, guess future moves, and anticipate the result while discussing with each other and playing virtual moves on a board. Usually there are a lot of famous players in the reviewing gallery, some even more famous than the two competing players, and it is easy to think that they should be able to find better moves than the players themselves. To my surprise, however, oftentimes the players in the match find far better moves, wholly unexpected to reviewers of superior ability.

It is not so difficult to guess why these things happen. When you're playing a game, and if you feel its importance, the meaning of the game becomes your whole world. There are things that can never be known by someone outside, but only to the players themselves. After the game is over, it is frequently the case that the players are the only two in the world who understand the real context of the game and can talk about it.

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Lesson 94

As you may know, there is a Baduk proverb saying that "even a moron connects against a peep." This is obviously an over-simplification and you shouldn't worry about being a moron even if you choose not to connect against a peep.

However, it would be helpful to know that to peep is a very powerful tactic in Baduk. With a peep, you can do something, or make a shape, which requires more than one move. Dia.1



Diagram 1

Black wants to envelop the white group on the side and build a wall toward the center. However, because the gap between the two ▲-marked black stones is wide, it seems impossible to block in the white stones. In this case, the peeping technique becomes useful.

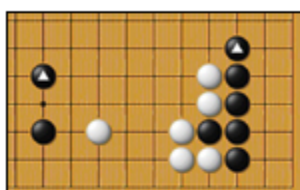


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Peeping is a move placed adjacent to a threatened cutting point; Black 1 here, threatening the cutting point at ▲, is such a move. While White has to defend the cutting point with 2 rather than going out to the center, Black can play the two moves 1 and 3, which reduce the breach in the blockade. If White bends at A instead of 6, Black will cut at 6.

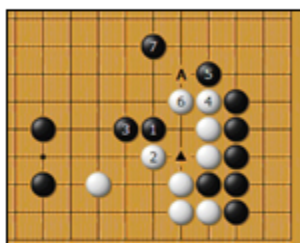


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

If your peep threatens two cutting point at the same time, as Black 3 does to A and B here, you can cut either of them. Note that to play Black 1 is the right order of moves.



Diagram 3

Diagram 4

The corner territory of White seems well-kept, but Black can live inside by two consecutive peeps.

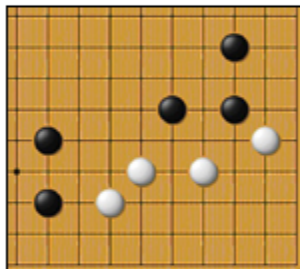


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

As you may guess, the first peep is Black 1. If White connects at 2, Black will peep again at 3. Then, up to Black 11, Black can easily make two eyes in the corner, which seemed to be White's territory.

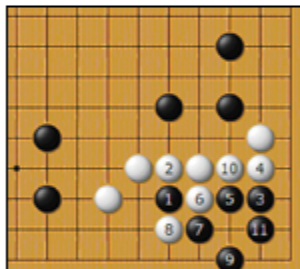


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

If White doesn't connect as in Dia.5 but blocks with 2, Black 3 is still a good move. With the help of this move, Black can play 5 which aims to bridge under with 9, and cut with 6 as well. Up to 9, Black succeeds in reducing White's territory enormously, and also leaves a good follow-up at A.

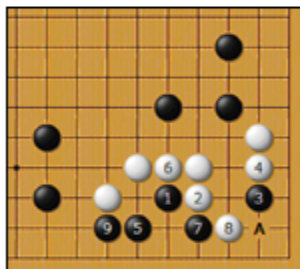


Diagram 6

Although peeping is a powerful technique, it is not always easy to use it correctly. Since a peep is usually a sente, as the moron proverb implies, people often play a peep without any particular purpose. However, oftentimes, a peep doesn't do any good to the player but rather strengthens the opponent's shape. Also, there is a specific way to peep in a certain situation.

Diagram 7

In order to deprive an eye-shape of the white group on the upper side, Black wants to peep the cutting point at A. What would be the correct move?

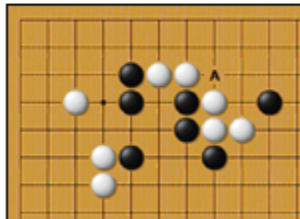


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

Black 1 is the easiest way to peep, but it leaves White the potential to peep at ▲, aiming at both A and B.

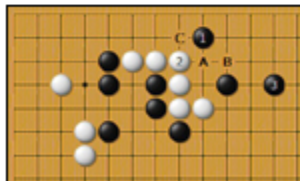


Diagram 8

Diagram 9

In this situation, Black 1 is the correct way of peeping, which prevents White's peeping with ▲ as in Dia.8. The attempt of White to defend the cutting point in sente through exchanging White A and Black B would just allow Black to peep again with C and remove White's possible base.



Diagram 9

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Lesson 95

Contrary to the famous proverb "even a moron connects against a peep," it is often a bad move to answer a peep by connecting. As there is a right way to peep, there is a right way to answer a peep as well.



Diagram 1

White 1 is a good move, peeping the cutting point at A and making White able to bridge under with B if Black connects against it. In this case, you may say that "you are a moron if you connect against a peep."

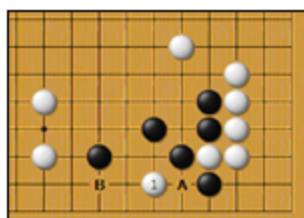


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

After White smartly peeps at 1, it is impossible for Black not to lose anything. The best choice for Black is to lessen the loss with the sequence from 2 to 6. Compared to the result of Dia. 1, which leaves almost no eye-shape for Black and strengthens the white stones to the left, the position here is much more favorable for Black.

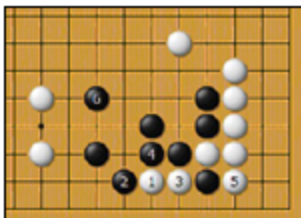


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

White 1 is a good move striking the vital point of Black's shape on the upper side. As you know, it is too naive for Black to connect at A to make double empty triangle shapes. You may think that B or C can be the right answer against White 1 since both create tiger's mouths, but there is a far better way for Black.

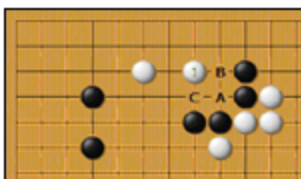


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

In this case, to peep with 2 is a smart move. If White connects at 3, Black can defend the cutting point in sente with 4.

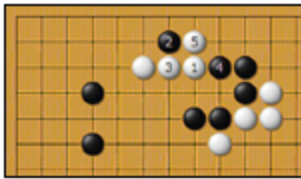


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

Even if White blocks with 3, the situation will be the same and Black can make a tiger's mouth with 4 in sente.



Diagram 5

Diagram 6

Even though the two white stones on the lower side look lonely and weak, if Black connects at A against White's peep with 1, there will be no way for Black to attack them severely. This is because White can freely jump toward the center with B aiming the cutting point at ▲.



Diagram 6

Diagram 7

In order to keep the initiative Black has on the lower side, it is good to counter-peep with 2. If White connects at 4 instead of cutting with 3, then Black will connect at 3, being satisfied as he blocks White's jumping out toward the center. If White cuts as shown here, Black will block the outside with the sequence up to 10. Although Black lost a bit in the territorial sense, the influence he got in the center compensates for the loss.



Diagram 7

Diagram 8

Of course it is not the correct answer for Black to connect at A against White 1. It only makes Black's shape heavy.



Diagram 8

Diagram 9

When a connection against a peep makes your group heavy, it's better to think about giving up those stones. In the situation here, Black 2 is the wisest answer. Even though White captured three black stones up to 9, Black can be happy with the wall he built in the center. If White bends with either 4 or 6 instead of 3 and 5, Black will cut that bend and the following fight will be quite doable for Black.

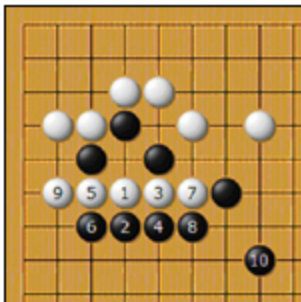


Diagram 9

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Lesson 96: High-level Connection (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

When you're talking about connection, it is usually about the connection between two closely related stones. However, in a real game, you sometimes want to save weak stones separated from the strong party by a wide gap or the opponent's stones.

To differentiate from a simple connection between two stones, we often call this kind high-level connection technique a "cross" or "bridge." The reason why we use that expression is, I think, the situation is akin to helping an isolated lamb rejoin the main flock safely settled on the other side of a river.

A crossing is mostly used near the edge of the board, since the gap between a weak group and a strong group is wide and difficult to cover in other, more open areas of the board.

Diagram 1

The simplest example of a crossing is to connect the two $\triangle$ -marked black stones with the black group in the corner.

Diagram 2

If Black plays 1 following the proverb 'the center is the vital point of a symmetrical shape,' White can cut by attaching on both sides with 2 and 4.

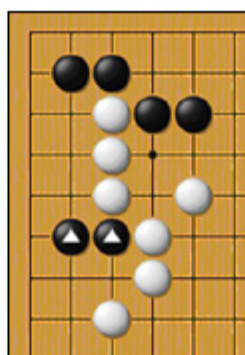


Diagram1



Diagram2

Diagram 3

In general, a large knight move is not a strong connecting method, while on the 1st and 2nd lines it can be a perfect connection so that Black 1 is the correct move here. Of course Black A can be the same connecting move, but in case there is a ko fight and you have to give up these two stones in order to win the ko, it's better to play near the stronger group.

Diag. 4 Diag. 5

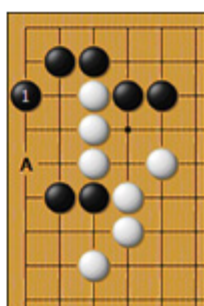


Diagram3

Diagram 4

At a glance, it seems that the two o-marked stones and the three $\triangle$ -marked stones are all dead, cut by White. However, using the two o-marked stones and the specific character of the edge of the board, you can save the three $\triangle$ -marked stones.

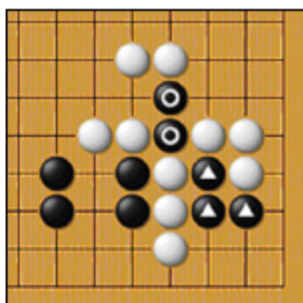


Diagram4

Diagram 5

In this case, the key point is to start a capturing race between the two black stones captured in the center and the three x-marked white stones separating the three black stones in the corner. Even though it's impossible for Black to win the race, he can cross under by lessening the white stones' liberties. Black 1 is the vital point lessening White's liberties. If Black simply plays 2 or 4 instead of 1, White will come down at 1 and intercept Black's crossing.



Diagram5

Diagram 6

The question is the connection of the $\triangle$ -marked black stone and the left corner. If Black threatens to capture the $\blacktriangle$ -marked white stone with A or C, White will choose to separate the black stone on the side by giving up his stone in atari with B or D. It is obvious that's not what Black wants.



Diagram6

Diagram 7

In this case, the knight's move with 1 is the answer. You may notice that the proverb 'opponent's vital point is my vital point' applies here. In Diagram 6, Black wants White to connect at A when he gives atari to him with C. If so, Black can easily cross with D. However, White blocks with D, to Black's frustration. Black 1 in this diagram, located at the same place with D in Diagram 6, makes White only able to connect at A and allows himself to bridge under with B.

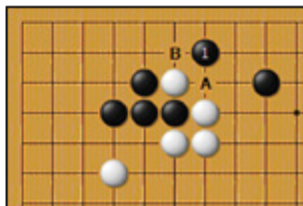


Diagram7

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Lesson 97: High-level Connection (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

The technique of crossing is used not only when your stones fall into unexpected danger. If you know how to cross, you can intentionally create a river to cross and lay the proper groundwork.



Diagram 1

The sequence from Black 1 to White 12 is part of a joseki. Black is building territory in the corner with the sacrifice of Black 3. It may appear a bit foolish for Black to play 9 and 11 in this early stage and leave Black 3 by itself, however these moves help form a connection between Black 1 and the black group in the corner. To simply bend at A doesn't work because of White's cut at B.

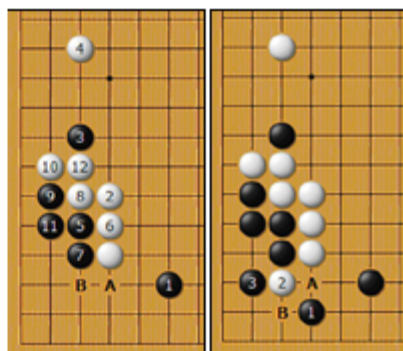


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Diagram 2

As you've seen in the previous lesson, a knight's move is very useful for crossing. In this situation, Black 1, a double knight's move, is the key. If White bends at 2, Black will answer with 3 instead of cutting at A. If White butts at A instead of bending with 2, Black will simply extend at B.

Diagram 3

Black has separated the two ▲-marked white stones with 1 to 5. Now, it's possible for him to continue the attack by jumping out to the center. However, it is always better to assure the life of your stones first, and then attack the enemy. The simplest way to save Black 1 to 5 would be a cross.



Diagram 3

Diagram 4

In a usual situation when you want to connect two stones, three lines apart and divided by an opponent stone in the middle, the correct move is to attach at the dividing stone like Black 1 here. However, if there is an exchange of A and B, the connection fails, as shown up to White 10.



Diagram 4

Diagram 5

Therefore, Black has to make sure that White cannot bend against his attachment by exchanging 1 and 2 before Black 3. If White still bends, Black will cut and give atari to the ▲-marked white stone. Instead of 2, if White plays A, then Black can cut the three white stones with B.



Diagram 5

Diagram 6

It seems that the three ▲-marked black stones are helpless, and there is no possibility of connecting them with the black group in the corner. However, with the help of the captured black stone and a subtle change of the sequence, the three stones can be saved.

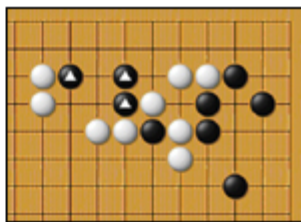


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

To cut directly with 1 is not a good idea. It is naive for Black to expect White to answer with A against Black 3 so that he can cross with B. White 4 is the correct answer to Black 3 and he will play at 3 if Black bends at 4 instead of 3.

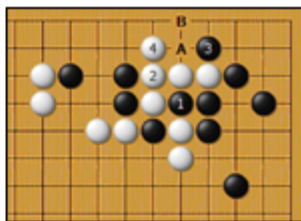


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

Therefore, the key is to make White play at 2. After White answers with 2 against Black's bend at 1, then Black cuts at 3 and crosses with 5 by spinning around the white group. If White plays A instead of blocking with 2, then Black will give atari by playing at 4, and then cutting at 2.

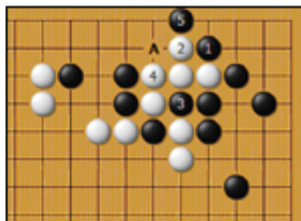


Diagram 8

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Lesson 98: Baduk in North Korea

By Nam Chi-hyung

Recently, two trains respectively belonging to North and South Korea crossed the DMZ for the first time in more than half a century. Also a North Korean cargo ship arrived at the port of Busan, and will carry cargoes between Busan and Rajin, three times a month from now on. These historic events raise the hope that the Baduk players of each side can more freely meet and play each other in the near future.



Even though we haven't heard much about Baduk in North Korea, it would not be too far-fetched to say that a match between the strongest players of the two sides will be remarkable, not only in the sense of history and politics, but also in its contents. Baduk in North Korea is more advanced than is commonly expected.

The first appearance of a North Korean player in an international Baduk event was in the 13th World Amateur Go Championship in 1991. The result of this competition was not wholly satisfactory, mainly because Baduk in North Korea had been considered an undesirable pastime for long time, the same as in China. However, from that time until the year 2000, we were able to meet players from North Korea almost every year, and their results were improved amazingly, year after year.

It was in 1989 that Baduk in North Korea became a sport supported by the government, when the Joseon Baduk Association was founded under the control of the National Sports Committee. The officially recorded Baduk playing population in North Korea is about 10,000, and about 25 players are registered as national players under the association. From 1990, 17 provincial institutes have been founded, and several cities and schools have their own teams. In Pyongyang, there are several Baduk clubs called Pyongyang Baduk-won, having 20 to 30 members each.

They also have several Baduk tournaments every year, such as Pyongyang Children's Baduk Tournament and Pyongyang Baduk Lover's Tournament. The big matches organized on national holidays are even covered through newspapers and TV.

Perhaps your main curiosity is about the strength of North Korean players; it is incredibly high considering the shortness of their modern Baduk history. The North Korean pair teams won twice in the World Pair-Go Championship, in 2000 and 2004, and Park Hogil took 2nd place in the 22nd World Amateur Go Championship in 1999 (in South Korea, the player who wins in the World Amateur Go Championship can become a professional of the Korean Baduk Association).

There are also many female North Korean players who are stronger than male players, like Cho Sae-byeol Cho and Ko Sung-sil. This can be easily seen in the invincibility of the North Korean pair teams. The more promising aspect is that all these strong players are very young.

Nowadays, the Joseon Baduk Association has been moved under the control of the Joseon Martial Arts Federation. The players are managed by the association in the same way as other martial artists. Every year, the association sends about 10 players to China to stay and be trained by the Chinese professionals, and lets the players participate in Chinese amateur tournaments.

It is no longer wishful thinking that we would be able to see these players studying and playing in South Korea in the not-so-distant future.

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Lesson 99: Difference in Counting Rules (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

In the past 50 years, Baduk has spread to the world beyond East Asia and is now enjoyed in Europe, America, Oceania and even Africa. People speaking different languages can communicate with each other through this game. Even though the sets of rules used around the world are not exactly the same, the differences between the rules are not very significant. Even if two players play following two different sets of rules, the game will end without any problems if there is agreement about a few minor points.



The minor differences in rules lie mainly in the counting. There are two big branches of counting rules: Area Counting and Territory Counting. The one used in Korea, Japan and the countries affected by Japanese Baduk is Territory Counting, and so it is also what I have been using in this series. Area Counting is used in China and the countries affected by Chinese Baduk. Since you are already familiar with Territory Counting, let me introduce you to Area Counting.

In Area Counting, the meaningful points include not only the empty intersections surrounded by the player's stones as in Territory Counting, but also the stones that surround them. This is because in China, Baduk was (and is) considered a game in which the player who has more stones on the board at the end of a game is the winner, and the empty intersections are regarded as where the player who surrounds them can put his stones at the end. Let's look at an example.

Diagram 1 Here, the o-marked white stones and the Δ -marked black stones are in a dual-life situation, and Black A is dead. In Area Counting, since the stones remaining alive at the end are counted as well as the empty intersections, these marked stones are counted and Black A is not. The x-marked points do not belong to any player and are distributed equally for each player. Therefore, the score is:

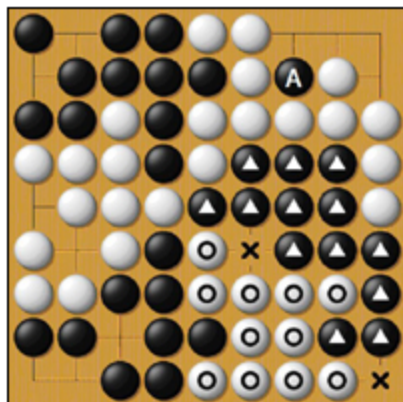


Diagram 1

White: 34 stones on the board + 7 empty intersections + 1 point in dual-life = 42
 Black: 33 stones on the board + 5 empty intersections + 1 point in dual-life = 39

So, White wins by 3 points.

Even though we used Area Counting above, actually the result is the same if you use Territory Counting. To be sure, let's check if it is. Since the dead stones are added to the capturer's score and the points inside a dual-life situation are not counted, the score is:

White: 7 empty intersections + 1 prisoner = 8
 Black: 5 empty intersections + 0 prisoner = 5

So, again, White wins by 3 points.

It may seem somewhat magical that we get the same result regardless of what rules we use. However, if you consider the fact that in Baduk, players put stones on the board in turn and stones on the board are counted in Area Counting while dead stones are counted in Territory Counting, you will easily solve the mystery.

Because it is quite bothersome to count all the stones and intersection on the board, the Chinese devised a variation. They perceived that under Area Counting, the player who gets more than half of the points on a board, namely more than 180.5 points with the normal size board, wins. The Chinese method uses this half point as a standard of comparison. Once again, see Dia. 1.

Since we have a 9 x 9 board, half of 81 points is 40.5. Then, we take only White or Black and count what he has under Area counting. For White, he has 42 points as seen before, so we compare this number with 40.5 and the difference between these two numbers is +1.5. Finally, we double the difference, which is $1.5 \times 2 = 3$, the same result we got before. You will get the same result if you take Black. Please verify this yourself.

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Lesson 100: Difference in Counting Rules (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

As we've seen in the last lesson, the main difference between the two existing counting rules—Area Counting and Territory Counting—is what is counted. While the latter takes into account the number of captured stones, the former considers the stones left on the board instead. Since the number of stones on the board is the number of moves each player played minus the number of captured stones, the results taken through these two counting rules are usually the same.



However, in certain situations, the application of the two rules can result in a big difference. Let's start with some notable features of Area Counting.

- First, in Area Counting, a player returns his prisoners to the opponent because they are not counted.
- Second, there is no neutral point as in Territory Counting because it is a two-point-difference whether a black stone is on a certain intersection or a white stone is.
- Third, it is not a loss at all that a player adds his stones inside his already-built territory, because both the empty intersections and the stones on the board are treated in the same way.
- Fourth, the intersections inside a dual-life situation are also counted. These characteristics, which are closely related each other, produce several situations considered differently under Area Counting and Territory Counting.

Diagram 1 The white and the black groups on the upper side are in a dual-life situation. As you already know, in Territory Counting, the stones and intersections belonging to a dual-life are not taken into account, while in Area Counting, they are treated as the same as the other stones and intersections on the board. Usually this doesn't make any serious difference, because normally the groups of both sides in a dual-life share only two intersections, and they are divided equally for both players.

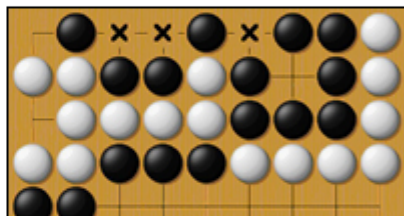


Diagram 1

However, here, Black can leave the three x-marked points untouched until all the other meaningful moves played out, and then get three more points than White by playing the x's while White can only play inside his own territory.

Diagram 2 Bent four in the corner is the example presented most often for showing the difference between the two counting rules. Here, the black group in the upper left corner is a bent four. Bent four in the corner is considered dead under the Korean and Japanese rule, which uses Territory Counting. This is because of the rule 'when only one player can start a ko and the other can do nothing but kill himself, the group of the latter is considered to be dead without further play.'

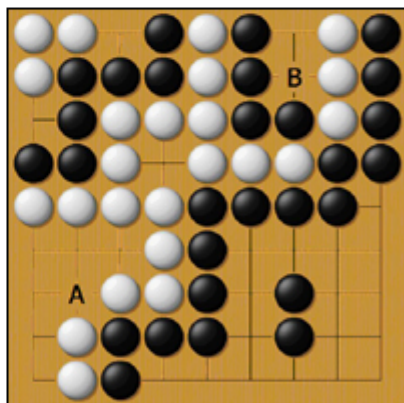


Diagram 2

On the contrary, under Area Counting, the player who can start a ko in the situation can actually do so after erasing all the possible ko threats of the opponent, since the ko-threat-erasing-move played inside his own territory will cost him nothing. That is, in this situation, assuming there is no dual-life in the upper right corner, White can play A first to erase a ko threat of Black, and start a ko in the corner. This result would be exactly the same as the one under Territory Counting. But, in this case, because of the dual-life, there is a ko threat which White cannot remove beforehand, namely B.

Therefore, if White plays A and then starts a ko, Black will play B as a ko threat, and White has to give up the three stones in the right corner to win the ko, which would make a serious difference in the result of the game.

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Lesson 101: Difference in Counting Rules (3)

By Nam Chi-hyung

In the last lesson, we looked at examples in which the two different rules draw different conclusions. Let's look at some more examples in this lesson and how they are resolved in many international Baduk tournaments.

There are numerous situations which are regulated in the same way as the bent-four-in-the-corner situation.



Diagram 1

The black and white groups in this corner seem to be in a dual life because both have an eye and cannot play at A as it is. Actually, this is not a dual life situation but a big eye vs. small eye, and the black group is dead under the Territory rule "when only one player can start a ko and the other can do nothing but kill himself, the group of the latter is considered to be dead without further play." That is, only White can play A and start a ko after he captures the three $\triangle$ -marked black stones, so the black group is considered dead as it is.

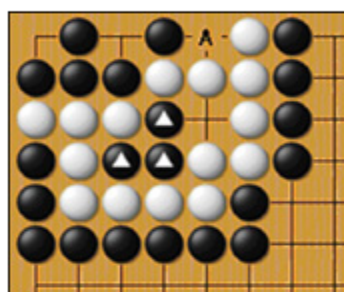


Diagram 1

As you may have already noticed, the logic regulating this situation is exactly the same as the one regulating bent four in the corner, and therefore the problems accompanying it arise in the same way. In other words, if there are a dual life and a big eye vs. small eye simultaneously, the result of the game may differ depending on the counting rules.

Here is another example.

Diagram 2-3

Under Territory Counting, the two x-marked points in the corner are meaningless neutral points. So, it doesn't matter who puts his stones on those two intersections.

Diagram 3

However, under Area Counting where the stones on the board are counted, the result would change depending on who takes those two intersections. In short, if it is White's turn, he will make a ko with 1 instead of just extending at 7 and letting Black play at 1. Black can take White 1 with 2, but Black's capturing stone doesn't matter under Area Counting. The only thing that matters is the stones remaining on the board at the end. Since Black has no ko threat, and White has one at 3, White wins the ko and takes the two intersections in the corner, and this will make a two-point difference.

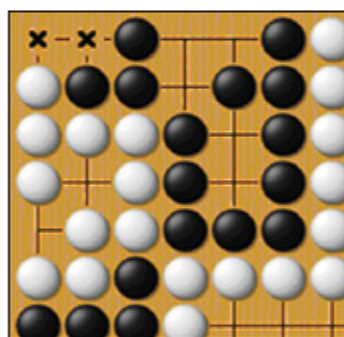


Diagram 2

These examples introduced in the last two lessons are representative cases showing the difference between the two counting rules. Though it's rare to meet these situations, still they occur in amateur games and even professional tournaments. Players familiar with just one set of rules often make mistakes in their counting when the other rule is used.

There has been much effort to avoid the players' confusion about the difference of rules; there are books explaining them, papers theorizing each rule, seminars and meetings trying to make a unified international rule, etc. However, none of them have been successful so far, which led to the following tacit agreement; when there is an international tournament, the tournament rule is decided by the rule of the hosting country or the sponsor.

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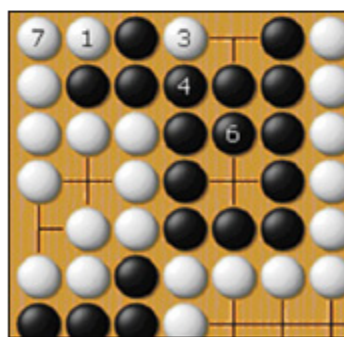


Diagram 3

Lesson 102: Back to Basics

By Nam Chi-hyung

The following is a well-known anecdote: a man asked a famous Baduk master if there was a secret method for improving Baduk strength. The master answered, if such a thing exists, he would like to learn it as well.

Like it says in the proverb "there is no royal road to learning," perhaps the best way to get better in any field is to spend more time and effort. However, you may still want to know where to invest the time and effort, and this is my answer; trust what you already know.

In learning Baduk, if your goal is to have more and more knowledge, you will never be satisfied. Baduk is always changing, and there are an enormous number of moves and variations, far beyond human capacity to master. I've never heard it said in Baduk that the winner of a game knows more than the loser. We may say that the winner plays better than the loser, but the amount of their knowledge is incomparable.

Then, what is it that you already know? In short, it is the basics. Let's look at some representative cases where the use of the basics is the best armor you have.

Diagram 1

White bends at 1. Where should Black answer, A or B?

Diagram 2

You may easily guess that Black 2 and 4 extending along the side are the correct moves, but can you explain why?

Diagram 3

It is one of the fundamentals of Baduk that stones without liberty die, therefore Black 2 lessening his own liberties cannot be a good move. You may feel uncomfortable because this explanation is too simple, and also Black 2 and 4 of this diagram are sente moves while those in Dia.2 are not. However, please look at them carefully, and then you will realize that the latter leaves a weakness to White, while the former leaves a weakness to Black at A.

Diagram 4

Black attacks the white stones in the corner with 1. What should White do then?

Diagram 5

I expect you to also know this answer. Then, can you explain how you know the answer based on basic knowledge?

Diagram 6

In this case, what you should remember is that Baduk is a game of efficiency. You can simply compare the efficiency of the marked stones of Black and White. While black stones are wasted in a small area, white stones are used to build a new and promising wall outside.

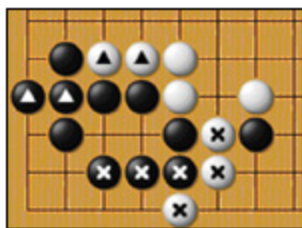


Diagram 6

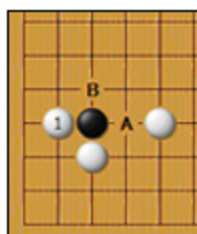


Diagram 1

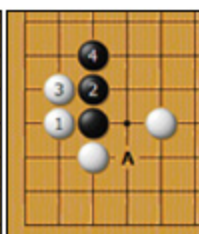


Diagram 2

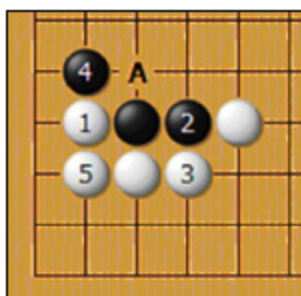


Diagram 3

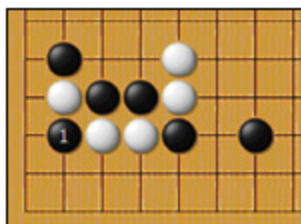


Diagram 4

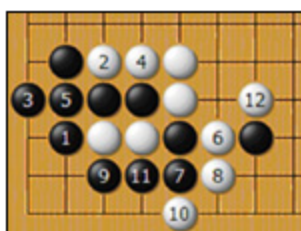


Diagram 5

I understand that you have experienced many occasions in which the fundamentals betrayed you. However, the basics are where you should begin and end. I'm sure the possibility that the basics will bring you a good result is far higher than not.

Furthermore, coming back to basics will help you refrain from sticking too closely to specific techniques and skills. Baduk is a game where a small amount of fundamentals can make limitless variations, which is the essential beauty of the game.

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Lesson 103: How to Enjoy Your Game

By Nam Chi-hyung

Nowadays, Baduk is taught in about 1,000 elementary schools in Korea as an extra curricular activity, which means that about 100,000 children are learning the game at this moment.

However, it is difficult for all the kids to fully appreciate the virtue of Baduk and continue learning and playing it for a long time. There are various reasons why children lose interest in a game; they may find other things of interest, or they may have no spare time to spend on a pastime.



Many young players give up because they think it is just too difficult to become good at.

Even grown-ups consider Baduk a game usually for those who like puzzles and solving difficult problems.

They say that their lives are already too complicated and they don't want to use their brain for the sake of a game.

However, Baduk is actually like singing a song. Have you seen the movie "The Sound of Music"? There you learn that if you know the notes, do, re, mi, then you can sing most anything. Baduk is just like that.

If you know the fundamentals, you can play all sorts of variations to the game.

Perhaps the reason why your head aches while you're playing Baduk is that you are too concerned with winning.

However, there is a very simple way to win; place more handicap stones. If you cannot win against your opponent with two stones, then place three stones to win.

When you become strong enough to feel comfortable with three stones, you can come back down to two stones. This is a better way to learn, since the opponent will play more seriously when he plays three-stone stonehandicap games than two-stonehandicap games.

To win a game is just one of the many joys you can get from Baduk. Don't let your desire to win take the joy from the game itself. People also hate to memorize josekis and opening formations. You want to imitate what professional players do, but if you don't know the meaning of a brilliant move, it's better not to play it. A joseki you don't understand often causes complicated situations you cannot handle.

Imitating professional moves can make you unable to know exactly what's going on. The opening stage, where you usually need to know josekis and formations, is a white canvas where you can draw your own sketch.

This is a unique phase in a game when you can spread your dream for the future of the game. The middle game and the endgame depend on what you do during the opening. Therefore, it is really important to be sure of your opening move.

All the difficult sequences of Baduk are not the object of memory but comprehension. If you think it is too difficult to understand a certain sequence, then just leave it and play your own move.

Perhaps the above-mentioned things can help you enjoy Baduk better. However, the most important thing for fully enjoying the game is to put all

your strength and ability into every single game. You may say that you don't have that energy after a hard day at work. But, just as you will feel healthier and refreshed after a powerful game of tennis or a long run, I'm sure you will feel your brain being recharged and invigorated after a serious two-hour game of Baduk.

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Lesson 104: Patterned Sacrifice (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Sacrifice is a method of deliberately giving up stones or territory. Since people usually don't want to give up their stones or territory without proper reason, many of the sacrificing tactics are emergency measures.

However, we can also find that many joseki are formulated through a sacrificing method. Because a joseki is a sequence where both Black and White get balanced results, it is important to get the corresponding benefit when a player sacrifice his stones.



Diagram 1

The sequence up to White 3 is a 5-4 point joseki that appears often. A to C are Black's possible answers to White 3, but here let's look at the variations with Black B, which are related to the sacrifice tactic.

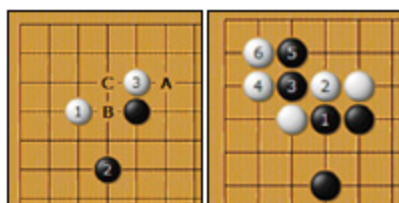


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Diagram 2

After pushing with 1, Black cuts at 3 and extends at 5. There, 3 and 5 are sacrificing stones which White can capture with 4 and 6. Black will not try to save those, but make an influence by using them.

Diagram 3

As you see here, even though the two black stones are dead, Black can have a wall outside.

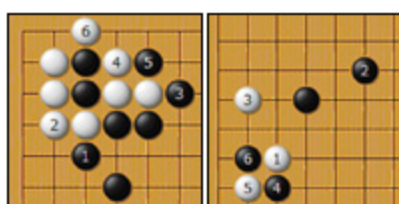


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

Diagram 4

Black 4 is a variation of the basic 4-4 point joseki. This can be useful when Black wants to build outside rather than keep the corner by answering at the 3-3 point. If White bends with 5, Black will cut with 6 and accept its sacrifice.

Diagram 5

White capturing Black's cutting stone is exactly what Black wants. Black will happily give up the stone and build a wall with 2 and 4.

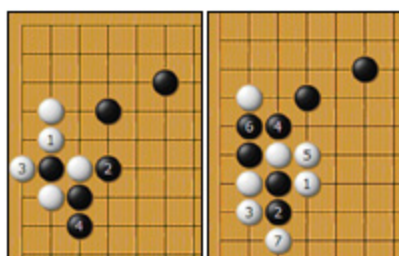


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

Diagram 6

Of course, the result in Diagram 5 is also acceptable for White, but if he doesn't want to let Black have what he expected, another option can be to give atari to the other stone with 1. That results in a big trade between Black and White. However, this is only possible for White when the ladder with 7 is favorable for him. This result not bad at all for Black, since he can use the ladder break later.

Diagram 7

The sequence Black 1 to 9 is a way to avoid complicated situations when White approaches from both sides. Obviously Black chooses this only when the White's wall isn't too large. During the sequence, Black 9, which looks simple and easy, is a very important move.

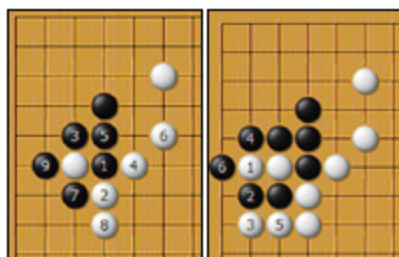


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

Diagram 8

If Black omits capturing with 9 in Diagram 7, White will come out with 1. This is not an attempt to save the stone in atari. Still, Black can capture them by blocking with 2. However, this time, White can make an invincible influence by playing 3 and 5 in sente. Because of this, Black cannot omit Black 9 in Dia.7, even though he has to yield sente to White.

Diagram 9

In the same context, White 8 in Diagram 7 cannot be replaced with White 1 in this diagram. White 1 not only lets Black be able to play elsewhere, but also leaves a big hole in White's wall at A.

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Diagram 9

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Lesson 105: Patterned Sacrifice (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Sacrifice is a useful tactic when your opponent's group of stones is stronger than yours. You can make your group or shape stronger by sacrificing some stones, while keeping your opponent satisfied by capturing what you sacrifice.

Diagram 1

The corner was occupied by Black with knight's enclosure. It is pretty hard for White to disturb the corner territory if Black wants to keep it, as you can see in his intention expressed in Black 4 and 6. In this case, it can be an alternative for White to let Black get the corner and save the outside influence for himself instead.



Diagram 1

Diagram 2

White's goal is to make the best use of what he sacrificed and to make a strong shape outside. Giving atari with 1 and 3 is a method to enlarge the sacrifice. By doing that, White can force Black to capture White 1 through the inefficient sequence from 8 to 14. To play a loose netting move with 9 is a tesuji to make the opponent's shape heavy.

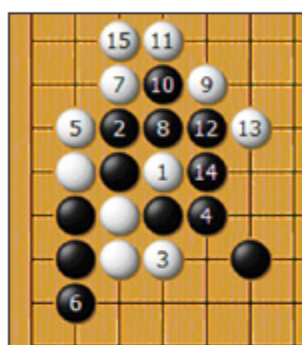


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

Black 2 is one of the more often-played replies against the one-space approach of White 1. If White bends at B, the corner territory usually goes to Black. On the contrary, White means getting the corner when he attaches at 3. In this case, to save the two black stones on the lower side with A is a foolish choice. It would be really difficult to save the stones and would also expose the weakness at B. What Black should do is to help strengthen the other stones by giving up the two.

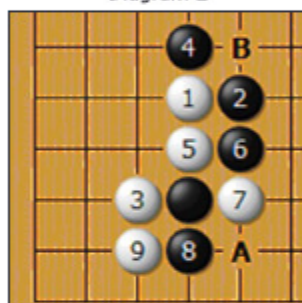


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

Black 1 is a good move because it asks White whether to capture the two stones or to connect the cutting point at 3. If White chooses to capture, Black will cut at 3 forcing White to take the two stones off with 4, and will throw in at A. Black's throw-in is a useful tactic to make the opponent's shape heavy before defending the weakness at B. In order to make Black connect at B, White has to capture Black and also answer to Black's atari at C by connecting at A, which will make White's shape really heavy and inefficient. Because it is not easy for White to stand that much inefficiency, Black's shape on the left side can be said to be pretty strong.

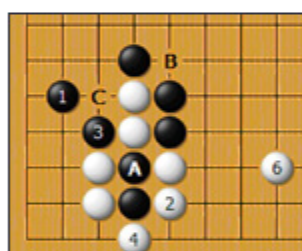


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

If White chooses to connect at 2, Black will wrap up the lower side by giving ataris with 3 and 5 in sente. The result left to Black 7 is satisfactory for Black since he gets both sides. If White bends at A, then Black will give up Black 1 again by counter-bending at B.

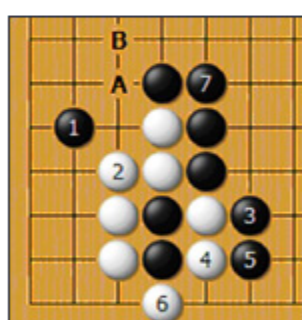


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

Before Black does something, White should add a move to protect the hole in his shape. However, often White omits the defense, especially in handicap games, because usually Black naively pushes at 1 and becomes blocked by White's sacrifice with 4. Even if Black jumps with a knight's move at 3, the result is exactly the same owing to White's cut across the knight's move.



Diagram 6

Diagram 7

It is usually bad to make a jump when the opponent is already peeping as here. However, if you let your stone cut on purpose, that can be a smart way to do something with the cost of the sacrificed stone. I bet that it would not be so easy to find the move at 1, but as this is played, the sequence up to 7 is easy and clear.

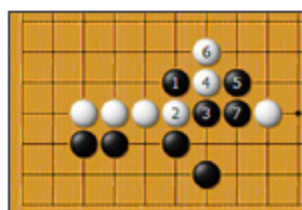


Diagram 7

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Lesson 106: Brilliant Empty Triangle (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

An empty triangle is a most notorious shape for its inefficiency. Therefore, most strong Baduk players avoid making an empty triangle and don't even think about the possibility of using it in their games. The repugnance against an empty triangle becomes something of an acquired instinct.

However, in certain local battles or the life-and-death of stones, this instinctive detestation for a certain shape or move, an empty triangle in this case, can become a serious obstacle for finding the best move. It is true that you need intuition to read even a small situation, or else there would be tons of variations you would have to think through; however, it is also true that you have to control your intuition not to interrupt a thorough and forthright reading.

It is not easy, of course, to shift between using your intuition in one situation and not using it in another. Frankly speaking, I don't know how I do it myself, but I have an idea. I'm going to show you some cases where an empty triangle is the best move. They look so beautiful, maybe because it is so hard to find a brilliant move within such a bad-looking shape. After seeing these examples, I hope you learn not to foreclose an empty triangle peremptorily when you're looking for candidates of a good move.

Diagram 1

This is a situation often seen in a handicap game. White approaches the corner even when he doesn't have enough space to extend. The correct move for White 1 is to simply jump at 5 and jump again to A after Black answers, by descending at 2. White 1 here is for making a cutting point at B and securing a base on the lower side. However, this is only a sweet dream of White, and there is a good way for Black to frustrate him.

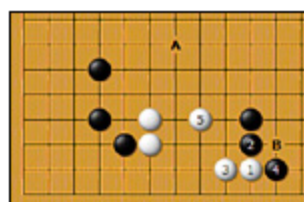


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

It would be easy to find Black 1, the empty triangle, because of the title of this lesson. If White blocks at 2, then Black 3 is another good move. A and B are paired moves (miai). If White extends at A with 2, then White's shape will not have a base.

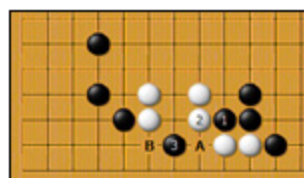


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

This is a situation from a 3-4 point joseki. Against Black 5, the correct move for White is not 6 but A. White may want to secure the bigger territory on the side by playing 6, but there is a way for Black to punish his greed.

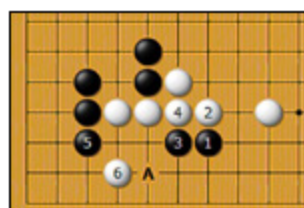


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

There are two empty triangles, Black 1 and A, and both are threatening to cut the ▲-marked white stone. But Black 1, which leaves the way to jump at 3, is the right move in this situation.

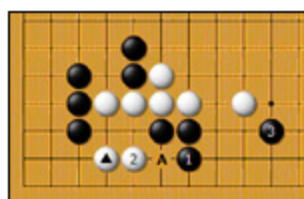


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

This is a similar example with the one in Dia. 1. White wants to attack the black group on the side, and an empty triangle can be a brilliant choice.

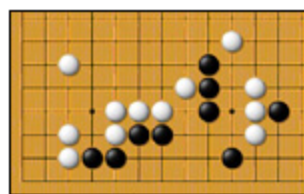


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

As you may guess, White 1 is the move. If Black blocks at 2, then White 3 is good. As before, A and B are paired moves, and Black will lose his base on the side. To extend at A instead of blocking at 2 cannot be an answer to Black, since then White will push at 2 once again and cut the three ▲-marked black stones off from the group on the side.

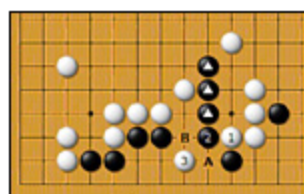


Diagram 6

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Lesson 107: Brilliant Empty Triangle (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Even though we've seen several examples where an empty triangle did a brilliant job, you may still think that they are extremely rare cases. However, we can easily find empty triangles in famous games of professional players. Let me introduce some of them here.



Diagram 1

The question is how to save the three ▲-marked white stones from Black's strong hands. This example is taken from a game played between Sakada 9 dan and Hujisawa 9 dan in 1963. Both players were so strong and famous in the 1960s and 70s in Japan. This situation did not actually occur in the game, but was considered by the players, and because of the move that saves the white stones, the result of the game was changed. To bend simply at A will call Black's cut at B. Although White can give atari to the cutting stone with C, he cannot save the stones, because Black will not answer the atari but cut with D.



Diagram 1

Diagram 2

As you may easily guess, the answer is White 1, an empty triangle. The reason why this is the only way to save the three stones is that it leaves a liberty for the white stones while forcing Black to answer at 2. This liberty allows White to play 3 and 5 and capture the black group in the upper left corner.

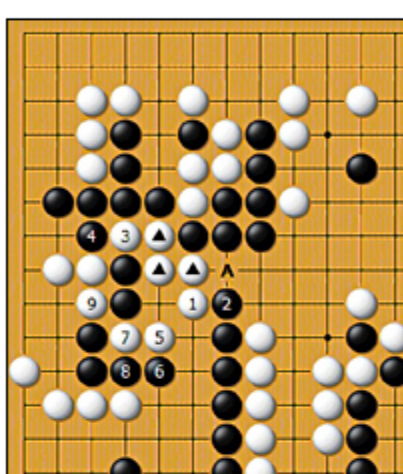


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

If Black blocks at 2, then White 3 is a good move. Since a push at 7 will be just blocked by White 6, the only way for Black to prevent White's connection is to play 4 and 6. However, this cut results in only the death of x-marked black stones instead, as you see.



Diagram 3

Diagram 4

The empty triangle with White 1, looking somewhat plain, is a very smart move. This move was played by Kobayashi 9 dan whose prime was in 1980s Japan. Owing to this empty triangle, White could build an influence to the left with 3 and 5 without worrying about Black's invasion to the upper side.

Diagram 5

But what if Black jumps at 1? Then cutting across Black's knight's move is good for White. Up to 6, the upper side is perfectly sealed.

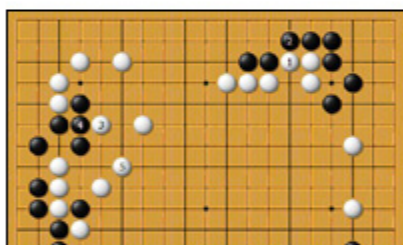


Diagram 4

Diagram 6

Actually, Black had a chance to discourage White's attempt to protect both the side and the center at the same time by playing another smart empty triangle at 2. Now since Black can jump at A to erase White's territory on the side, White has to block with 5 and let Black jump toward the center with 6.



Diagram 5

Diagram 7

This is a real situation that happened in a game of Park Young-hoon 9 dan, who won the Fujitsu Cup international Baduk championship twice. Black just comes into White's area on the right side and up to 10, the five stones look to be in danger. Park 9 dan saved these five stones with an empty triangle.

Dia.8 Dia.9 Dia.10

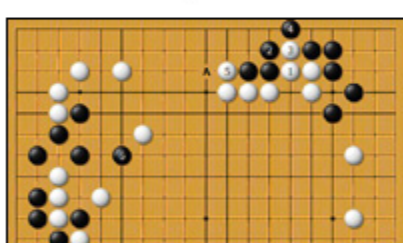


Diagram 6

Diagram 8

Black cannot save the stones by simply blocking at 1 because of White 2 and 4.

Diagram 9

Neither can Black's bend at 1 be a help. This time, the black group in the lower right corner is dead.

Diagram 10

The answer is Black 1, an empty triangle. If White blocks at 2, then Black will capture the three white stones in the upper corner as shown. If White tries to attack the five black stones by pushing at 3 instead of 2, then Black will connect his stones by playing at 2 with the group in the lower corner. The latter is possible because there is a weakness at A in White's shape.

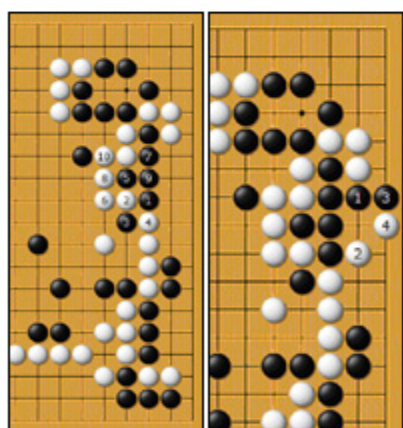


Diagram 7



Diagram 8

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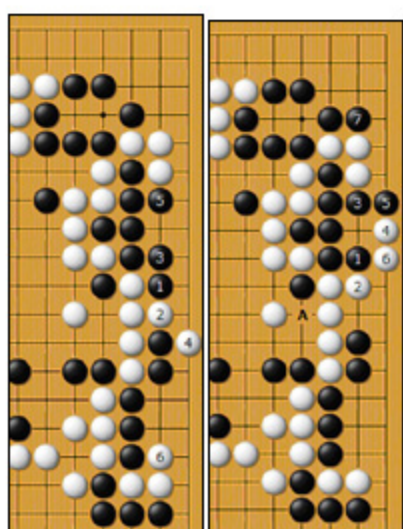


Diagram 9

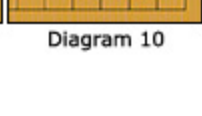


Diagram 10

Lesson 108: Brilliant Self-Atari (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

The technique of self-atari is used usually in a negative way. Let's look at Dia. 1.

Diagram 1

White 1 and 3 are smart moves that capture the three ▲-marked black stones. White 1, which has nothing to do with the capturing of the black stones, is actually a move to put Black in a self-atari situation.



Diagram 2

The value of White 1 of Dia. 1 shows up here more clearly. After the capturing race up to White 4, Black wants to play at x but cannot. Owing to the exchange of the ▲-marked black and white stones, to play at x would be a self-atari for Black.

As shown above, the majority of the life-and-death problems which call for self-atari as the answer are about putting the opponent in a position unable to play a certain move because playing it sets himself in atari. However, there are cases where placing oneself in self-atari can be a brilliant move.

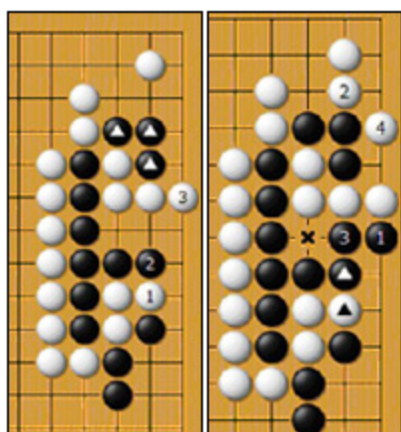


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Perhaps this doesn't sound very different from the self-sacrificing tactics, but while sacrifice is focused on giving a part of your stones up in order to gain another profit, self-atari is about lessening your own liberties on purpose. In fact, the original Asian term for self-atari refers not only to the action of literally 'putting himself in atari' but actually all kinds of moves to fill the liberties of your own group of stones.

Since stones on the board are alive only when they have liberties, it is usually pointless to fill the liberties of your stones intentionally; however, just like playing an empty triangle with intent, to be in self-atari can be a good move. Let's look at a simple example.

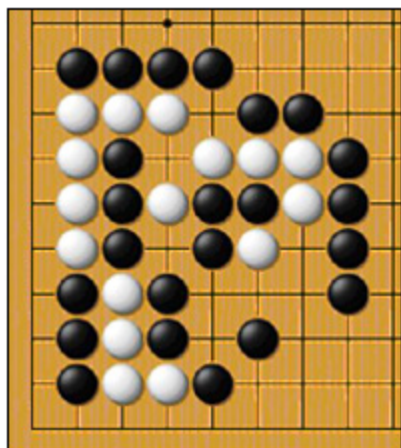


Diagram 3

Diagram 3

This is about saving the whole white group in this corner. It may look quite difficult, but if you call to mind that we're talking about self-atari, it would be much easier to find the answer.



Diagram 4

Diagram 4

As you may guess, the answer is White 1, which puts the two white stones in atari. After Black captures the two stones, White 3 is played in the same place as 1, and Black again captures it with A. Then, as you may verify, White 5 can kill the cluster of black stones.

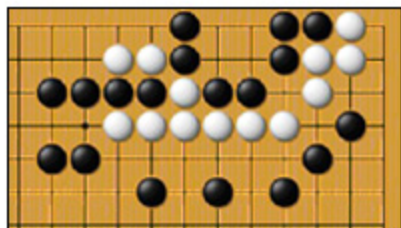


Diagram 5

Diagram 5

If the last example reminds you more of sacrificing tactics, I hope this one gives you a better image of self-atari. Again, you have to save the white group in this corner.

Diagram 6

It would not be easy to find the answer, White 1, which is a move lessening the liberties of the two ▲-marked white stones, and an empty triangle as well. However, this seemingly worthless move is the savior of the big white group, since Black cannot save the three stones placed in atari by White 3 and 5. If Black doesn't connect at 2 but just captures the three white stones on the upper side with 4, White will cut at 2 in sente and play 5.

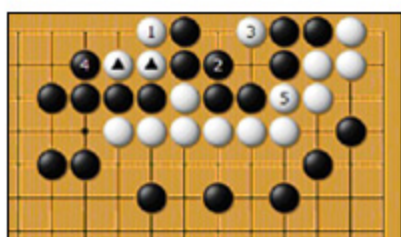


Diagram 6

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Lesson 109: Brilliant Self-Atari (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Just as there is an instinctive dislike against an empty triangle shape; putting the friendly stones in atari is naturally abhorred by players. Therefore, maybe the main difficulty of finding the answer of the following problems is not your reading skill, but your prejudice about the shapes.



Diagram 1

You have to save either the white stones in the corner or the two stones on the left. Since the two ▲-marked white stones don't have many liberties, White needs a very smart move.

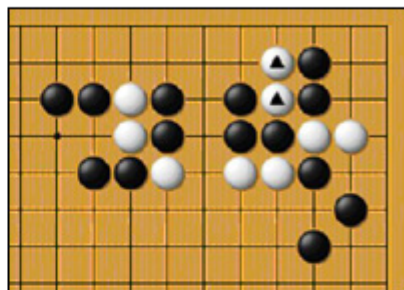


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

White 1 may be a natural move, but White 3 will be pretty hard to find, even if you already know what to look for. White 3 doesn't directly help either the three stones on the right or the two stones on the left, but only adds another weak stone. However, it is a really brilliant move which puts Black in a dilemma. If Black tries to capture any of the white stones with either A or B, White will capture either the three black stones on the right or the two black stones on the left with C.

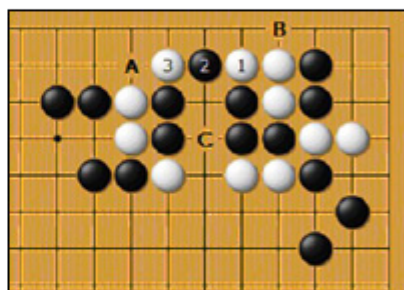


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

White's goal is to kill the entire black group on the side. If White just plays A, Black will save the group on the right with B.

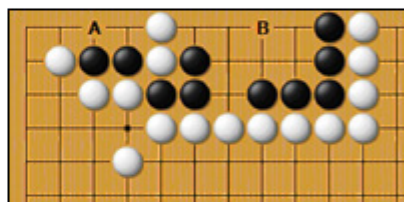


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

White 1 and 3 are to prevent Black from playing A. The most important move is White 5, which puts the two white stones in atari. It is the only way to deter Black's playing A. Then, what should be White's next move after Black's capturing with 6? Although not shown in the diagram, White 7 should be at 3, which is still blocking Black from playing A. As you may have already noticed, White's moves from 3 to 7 put not only himself but also Black's playing A into atari.

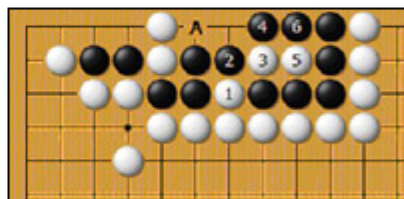


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

This is a very interesting situation. It seems to be a dual-life because neither player can play A nor B. But stop! It is true that Black cannot play either position, but is the same true for White?

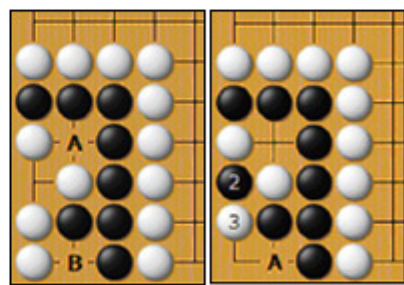


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

Diagram 6

What if White plays B in Dia.5? Then Black cannot help but capture the three white stones with 2, and then White will take Black 2 with 3. Now the situation is totally changed from the one in the last diagram, since Black cannot turn the situation to a dual-life as before by playing A. Black's playing A would just result in the death of his own group, which is a flower-five. On the contrary, White can always play A and start a ko as you can see.

Let's go back to the original situation in Dia.5. It ends as a dual-life if that is what White wants. However, White can also turn the situation into a ko by means of putting himself in self-atari. This means that White can choose the most favorable timing for him to start the ko in this shape. It would be a time-bomb for Black!

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Lesson 110: Brilliant Order of Moves (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

When you are walking to the opposite corner of a city block, it's possible to get there by first going straight and then turning right, or going right first and then turning to the left. As long as you reach your destination, everything is fine. However, in Baduk, playing A first and then B is completely different from playing B first, then A.



Diagram 1

To play Black 1 and 3 right away can be good endgame moves, but will not save the five ja-marked black stones. After the five stones are in atari, it is useless for Black to cut A and give atari to White since his stones will die before White's. However, if Black changes the sequence slightly, they can be saved.

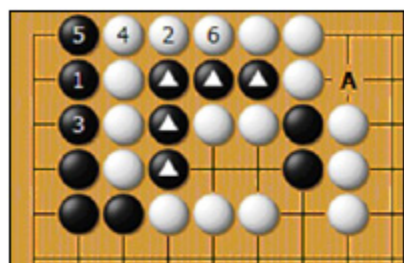


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Cutting with Black 1 is a move called sequential magic, which revives the five stones in danger. Owing to the exchange of Black 1 and White 2, now White cannot connect at A against Black's atari with 7.

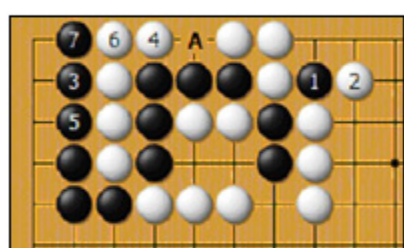


Diagram 2

Sometimes the change in the order of moves can make the opponent play a move contrary to his own benefit.

Diagram 3

White's group on the left side is in danger. The good thing for White is that there are several cutting points in Black's shape. The desperate series of atari and cutting, however, cannot save the group.

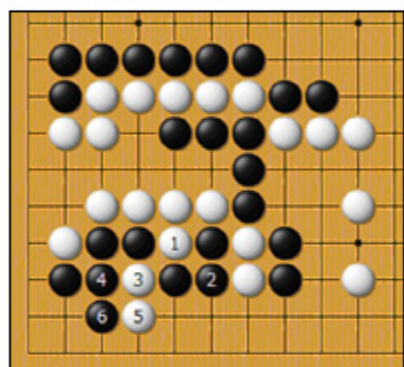


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

To cut at 1 first is the sequential magic in this case. Because of the double-atari with A, Black cannot help but play an empty triangle with 2. If Black plays A to avoid the double-atari, then the one black stone in the corner will be killed by White B.

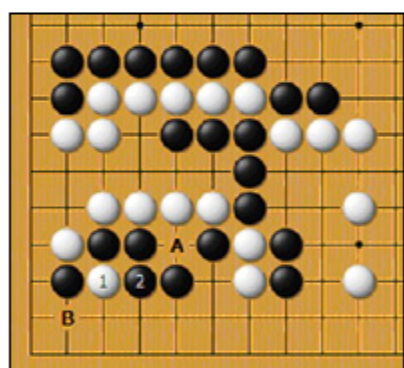


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

Continuing from the last diagram, White 5 is a good move to make the capturing race favorable for White. After Black 6, White no longer has a reason to give atari with A, so plays 7 instead. If Black connects at A, Black's group in the corner, rather than White's, will die.

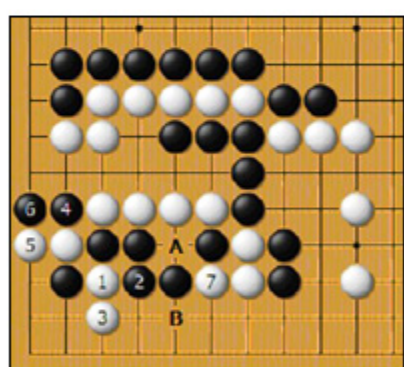


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

This is a problem for finding the best endgame move to reduce Black's territory to the left. White can give atari either with A or with B. However, simply playing atari with either of the two doesn't have big reducing power.

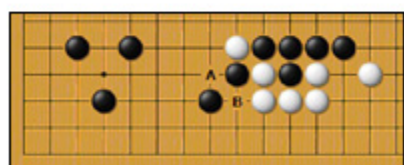


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

White 1 here is a brilliant move to enlarge the power of White's atari. The position on the lower side and White 1 are worth remembering. This is a way to make the atari, which is usually a very simple move, much more powerful. If Black blocks White's connection with 2, then the atari, white 3, becomes more powerful, forcing Black to compose an empty triangle with 4. After worsening Black's shape like this, White can bridge under with the sacrifice of White 3.



Diagram 7

Diagram 8

If Black answers against White 1 from above as here, White will give atari from underneath with 3, which again forces Black to make an empty triangle and then connect White 1 with 5.

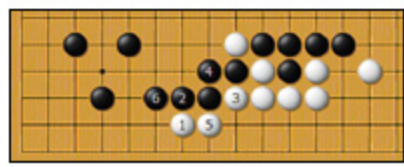


Diagram 8

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Lesson 111: Brilliant Order of Moves (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

In Baduk, there are moves whose purpose is to probe or sound out the opponent to see how he would respond. The player's next move is decided according to his opponent's answer to the probing move.

Diagram 1

White has to defend the cutting point at A. However, to simply connect at A leaves another cutting point at B, and of course connecting at B lets the two black stones be cut by White A. There is no way for Black to defend both weaknesses in one move, but it's possible to decide 'how' to defend after seeing White's answer to a certain move.

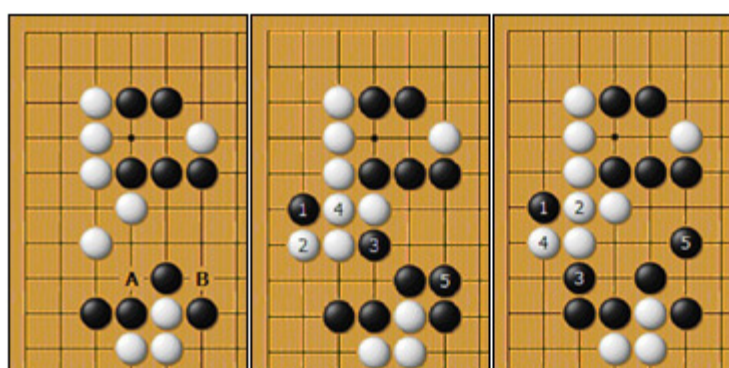


Diagram 2

Black 1 is a nice move asking White whether to answer with 2 or 4. If White chooses blocking with 2, then Black will guard the cutting point A in Diagram 1 with 3 in sente by forcing White to connect at 4 and go on to defend B with 5.

Diagram 3

If White answers with 2 against Black's peeping at 1, then Black 3 is a move to protect the cutting point in sente. White has to block the connection between Black 1 and 3 with 4, and Black can play 5.

The usefulness of these kinds of probing moves is not to put the opponent in trouble, but to help the player to play the better move. The one shown above is to help Black defend his weakness more efficiently. Sometimes it is for playing a better haengma, other times for creating more ko threats, etc. I can't confidently state that there is a neat categorization between brilliant sequential magic and a brilliant probing move. Maybe I can just say that in many cases, sequential magic doesn't give an option for the opponent to choose, but only forces a certain reply, while a probing move basically depends on how the opponent answers. Let's compare the next example with the one above.

Diagram 4

This is about finding the best move for an endgame. If White simply pushes at A, Black will answer with B. Then, as you see, White C is not a sente.

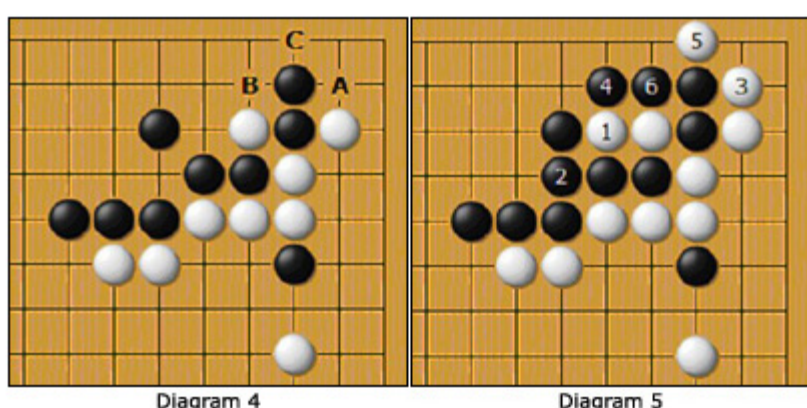


Diagram 5

However, White can make that C in Diagram 4 sente by playing 1 here first. Black cannot help but connect at 2 and then White can play out until 5 in sente.

As we've seen in the second example, usually the move in sequential magic is a forcing move. In that sense, perhaps the last example in the previous lesson is not an example of sequential magic, but rather of one of sounding out the opponent's answer. I can't positively state the best way to distinguish one from the other. Let us just appreciate another example of a brilliant order of moves.

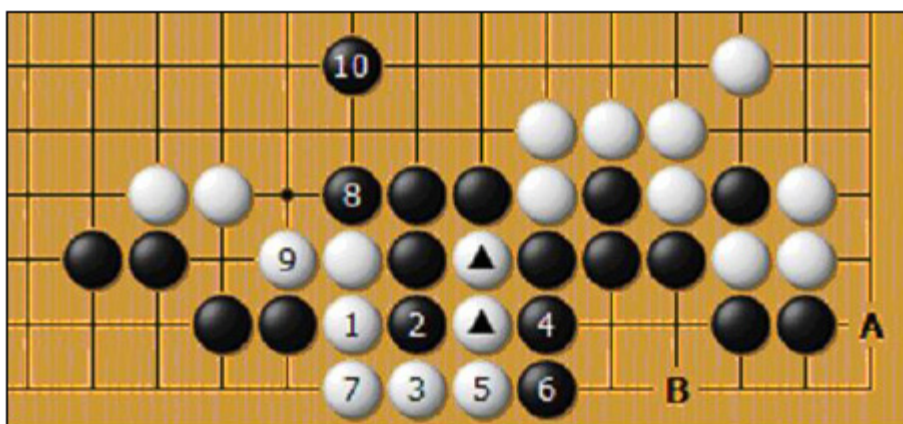


Diagram 6

White 1 is a way to save the two ▲-marked White stones, but not the optimal solution. Here, the black group in the corner is alive since Black can make two eyes by playing B against White A. White can unsettle the black group by exchanging some moves before he saves the two ▲-marked stones.

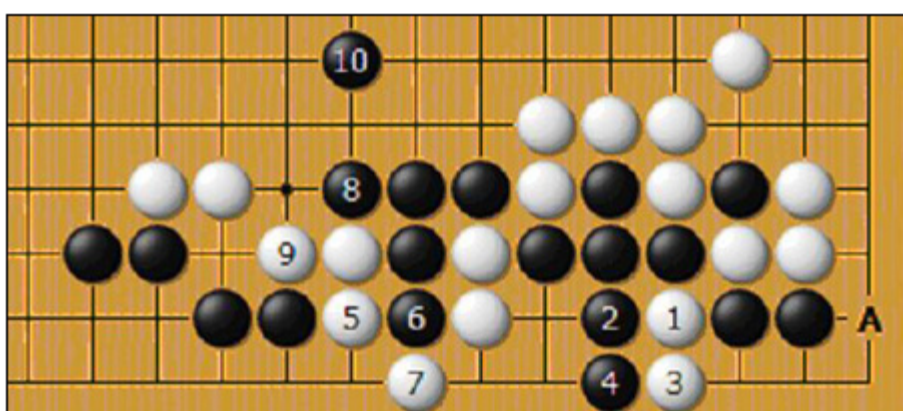


Diagram 7

White 1 and 3 are very clever moves which force Black to answer with nothing but 2 and 4. The sequence up to 9 is almost the same as the one in Diagram 6, but now the black group in the corner can be killed by White A.

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Lesson 112: Eternal Life

By Nam Chi-hyung

In Baduk, if you want to ensure the life of your group of stones, you have to make two separate eyes. All other types of living, including dual-life, can be put in jeopardy according to the situation. The type of living I'm going to introduce in this lesson, however, without separated eyes, is called 'eternal life.'



Diagram 1

The white group looks to be in fatal danger after Black 1. Of course, if White takes off Black 1 with A, then the group is killed by Black B, which makes a flower-five shape in the corner.



Diagram 1

Diagram 2

What if, however, White comes in with 2? Obviously then there is no choice for Black but to capture the two white stones with 3.

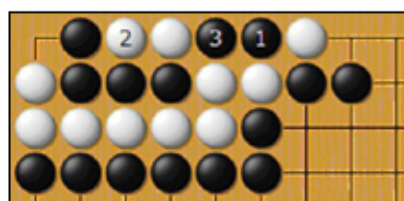


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

As you may have noticed already, after Black makes the capture in the last diagram, White can capture the two black stones with 4.

Then what? If you're following this explanation with stones and a board, you should notice that the situation comes back to the one in Dia. 1. If Black plays A again, the same sequence from 1 to 4 will recur.



Diagram 3

As shown above, the white group in the corner cannot be killed. No matter how hard the opponent tries, the situation will always come back to the starting position. Hence, the corner position can be threatened but never killed. This is why the situation gets the name, 'eternal life.'

Because capture and recapture are repeated in an eternal life position, some Baduk rules treat the position as a special type of ko. They use the term 'super ko' to categorize these kinds of unusual situations in which the normal ko rule - 'you cannot take a ko back right after your opponent takes it, but have to make a ko threat beforehand' - cannot stop the repetition of capture and recapture. Players have to make a ko threat in a super ko situation before coming back to the exact same situation where they start a repeating sequence.

However, in major rules such as the Korean, Japanese, and Chinese, eternal life will result in a game without outcome if neither player wants to end the repetition.

Eternal life appears in real games very rarely, but the following examples may look quite familiar.

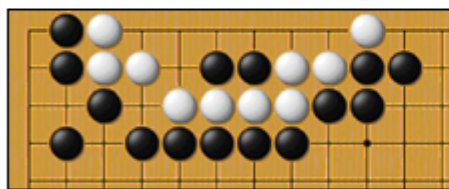


Diagram 4

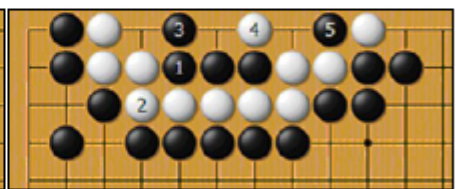


Diagram 5

Diagram 4

Even though White's eye shape looks spacious, there is a way for Black to turn it into an eternal life.

Diagram 5

The sequence up to 5 is very simple. You can recognize the resulting shape as being practically the same as the one in Dia. 1.

Diagram 6

This one may look very different from the two other situations shown above. However, if you recall the typical shape of eternal life and the special character of the corner edge, it will not be so difficult to solve.



Diagram 6

Diagram 7

Perhaps the answer is much simpler than you expected. The sequence up to 8 is compulsory. If White changes any part of the sequence, he will die. Although the resulting shape seems to be a little bit different, its fundamental nature is the same as in the other examples.

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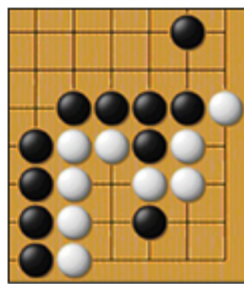


Diagram 7

Lesson 113: Eternal Life (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

After I wrote the last lesson on eternal life, Setsuo Morino, a Japanese 9-dan professional Baduk player, paid me a visit. He showed me a Baduk diagram and wanted me to solve the problem.

According to him, the problem was made by one of his pupils, Hoshinobu Hatanaka, who is now a 1-dan professional player in the Kansai Baduk Association of Japan. This young genius made the problem when he was a mere student.



Diagram 1

This is the problem I got from Mr. Morino.

Of course, there are many excellent life and death problems invented by Korean professional players. However, there is a reason why I'm introducing this problem here.

This problem is precisely about 'eternal life.' Although the problem is pretty hard to solve even for strong amateurs, I hope you will be able to appreciate the depth of the game in the attempt. Let's look at the problem.

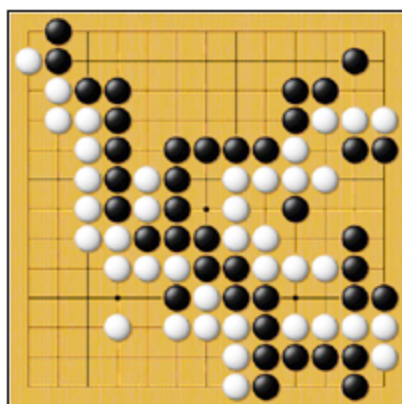


Diagram 1

It is Black's turn and its mission is to not lose the game. As you see, most of the borderlines are settled except on the right side. White's territory on the left is bigger than Black's territory on the upper side and the lower right corner by one point. Furthermore, the two groups of White and Black on the right side are not completely alive.

Because Black has a smaller territory than White, it is not enough for Black to make a dual-life situation on the right side. Also, he doesn't have any ko threats even if he succeeds in creating a ko. Then, what else can Black do?

I hope you remember that when there is an eternal life, and if neither player gives up the situation, the game is considered a draw. By now, you should have guessed the answer. Yes, Black has to make an eternal life on the right side in order not to lose the game.

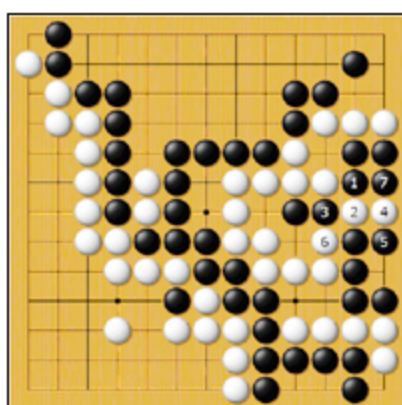


Diagram 2

The process for making an eternal life is quite difficult. The sequence from 1 to 7 is its first step. With any other move, such as if Black plays 2 instead of 1, or 4 instead of 3, the Black group cannot escape death.

Diagram 3

After Black captures the two white stones with 7 in Dia.2, White 1 here is mandatory to prevent Black from making two eyes. If Black captures it with A, the situation will turn into a ko. However, as mentioned above, Black does not have any ko threats. Maybe the situation looks to be disastrous for Black, but in fact he has a brilliant move at 2.

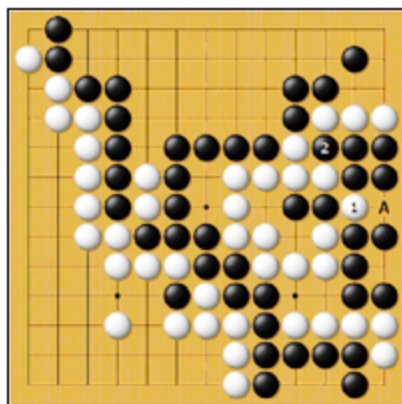


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

Black anticipated White capturing the five stones with 1. However, Black also can capture White by cutting at 2. This is a skill called 'cut-back.' Now, the tables are turned. White has no choice but to enlarge the victim with 3. If he plays A instead of 3, the entire white group will die.

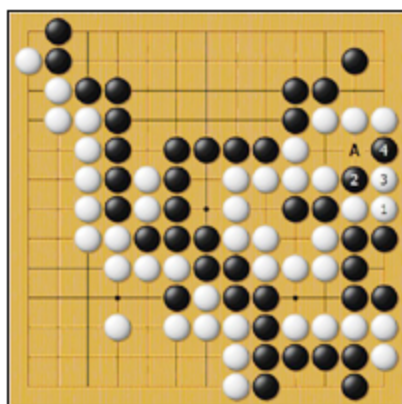


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

After Black's capture of the three white stones in Dia.4, White again throws in at 1. If Black captures it with 3, then White 2 will kill the black group.

Therefore, the sequence up to Black 4 is compulsory. Now, did you notice that the final situation of this diagram is the same as the one in Dia.3?

If not, please add one move of White at 1 again, and one move of Black at A. Do you see the repetition? Perhaps this eternal life has the longest repeating term that I have ever seen.

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Diagram 5

Lesson 114: The Number of Star Points

Nowadays, the "star points" in Baduk refer to the nine black dots painted on the intersections along the fourth lines. Since we use the star points in playing handicap games, and the maximum number of handicap stones is nine, we don't feel any awkwardness in the fact that there are nine star points; however, until the mid-20th century, the numbers of star points in Japan, China, and Korea were all different.



The modern form of Baduk comes from Japan, and the number of star points in Japan has been nine for at least 400 years. But, as you already know, until fairly recently, it was 17 in Korea, 5 in China and 12 in Tibet.

What influence did the difference in star points have on the game? The starting positions of Baduk differ according to the number of star points. In Korean traditional Sunjang Baduk, Black and White placed 8 stones each on the board before starting, and Black opened the game by playing 1 on the star point in the center, as shown in Diagram 1.

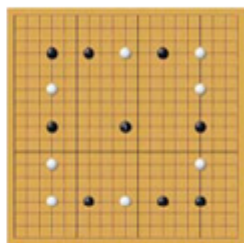


Diagram 1

In China, Black and White put two stones each on the board, as shown in Diagram 2, and either Black or White could start the game by playing anywhere they wanted. There was no fixed rule for the first move as in Sunjang (I'm sorry for not being able to find a software program able to draw a diagram with 5 star points; the last star point is on the intersection in the center).

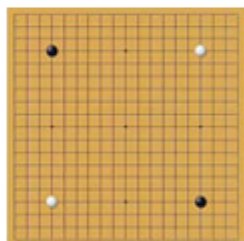


Diagram 2

Even though it is very hard nowadays to find people playing Baduk in the area near Tibet, we can still find Baduk boards there handed down from old times, which have 12 star points. Actually the number of lines on the Tibetan Baduk board is 17, and its starting position looks a lot like Korean Sunjang Baduk as shown in Diagram 3. (Again, I'm sorry that there are 9 star points on the diagram, which faithfully follows the number of star points in modern Baduk.) The distinctive feature of Tibetan Baduk is that there is no center star point, and the points are painted along the 3rd line. As in the Chinese style, there was no rule for where the first move should be played.

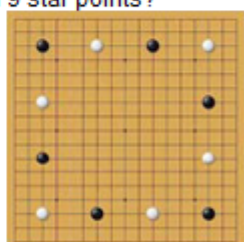


Diagram 3

Thus, in Korea, China, and Tibet, the star points were fully utilized in an even game. However, in Japan, and consequently modern Baduk, they are used only in handicap games. The number of nine has never been found outside of Japan. Then, how did the Japanese people start playing Baduk with 9 star points?

As far as I know, there is no concrete evidence explaining how there came to be nine star points. Even on the different usage of star points, there aren't that many reliable facts, or even guesses. Some believe that the unknown ancient Chinese form, which is believed to be the origin of all the other variations, was the same as the modern form; that is, played with no stones on the board before starting an even game. They think the Korean and Chinese forms that utilize pre-placed stones are more recent versions of the game because they need more complicated starting positions. However, others claim that the Japanese form is more modern because more variations are possible in a game that starts without any fixed rules from the very beginning. Well, what do you think?

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Lesson 115 : Brilliant Move With No Name (1)

There are certain unexplainable but marvelous moves in Baduk; despite the long history of the game, we are unable to describe how they came about.

Indeed, even the player himself cannot explain the process that makes him play the specific move. Perhaps these kinds of moves are given by a god of Baduk, and are better classified as 'intuition' rather than skill.



The following is one of the many magnificent moves that have no name.

A Korean professional player, Moon Yongjik, suggested calling these kinds of moves "Nal-Boochigi," which means "flying attachment." I agree with his point of view that we haven't put enough effort into defining the moves that we play, and many techniques remain unexplained to amateurs.

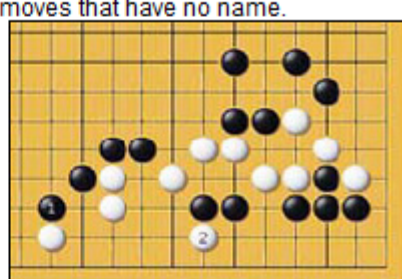


Diagram 1

However, his concept of "Nal-Boochigi" comes in so many forms and moves that I still don't know how I would classify the following example.

Diagram 1 White 2 is what we should pay attention to. This was taken from a game played by Sakada (White) and Hujisawa (Black) of Japan in 1960. With this move, White could save the group, which looks to be under siege by Black 1.

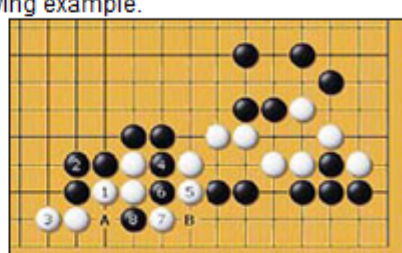


Diagram 2

Diagram 2 If White attempts to go out tactlessly with 1 and 3, Black can cut the connection pushing at 6 and 8. If White answers the atari with A, Black will cut at B.

Diagram 3 However, the situation will change if Black answers with 1 as in this diagram. As you can see, White can escape with 2 to 6, since the ▲-marked stone composes a tiger's mouth when White answers with B against Black's pushing at A.

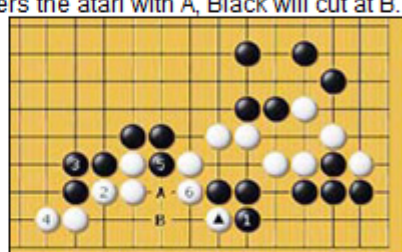


Diagram 3

Diagram 4 The result wouldn't change much even if Black plays otherwise. For example, if Black



Diagram 4

pushes at A, White will cut the three black stones with 2 and 4, and enlarge his sacrificing stones with 6 to play 10 in sente. After Black is forced to answer with 11, White can escape the siege with 12. Similarly, if Black bends at 6 instead of pushing at 1, White will cut with 1 as well as making a bamboo joint, and again go out with 12 after Black answers the cut.

Diagram 5 The second example is taken from a game between Kato and Kobayashi Koichi. White 1 looks somewhat silly, and Black played 2 in sente and went elsewhere to play a large end game move. However, it was an unexpected yet big mistake for Black to underestimate the destructive power of White 1. It was groundwork for playing White 5.



Diagram 5

Diagram 6 If Black bends at 1, White will peep at 2. To connect at 3 is necessary not to lose the two black stones on the side. However, then White will destroy the Black territory with 4 to 8. Against Black A, White will cut at B, which gives atari to the ▲-marked stone and aims to give another atari with C. Even if Black bends with 5 instead of 1, the result would be almost the same, because of White's cut at 4.

Diagram 7 To extend at 1 instead of bending would not reduce the damage. If Black connects at A replying to White 4, White will live inside the corner, and if Black tries to kill them, the situation will be a ko with the sequence up to 14, which is devastating for Black.



Diagram 6

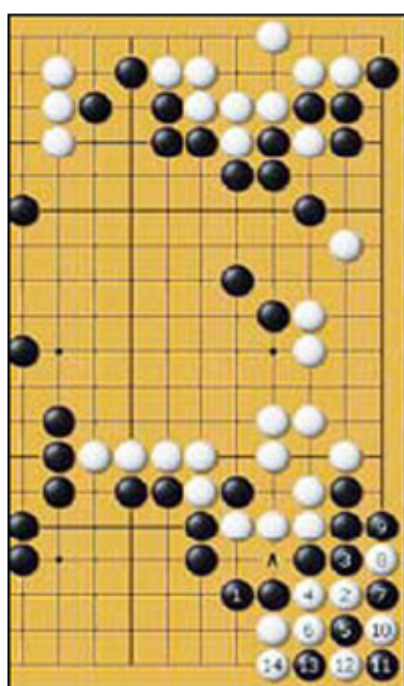


Diagram 7

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Lesson 116 :A Brilliant Move With No Name (2)

There are several explanations on the subject of how the strong players find good moves.

However, in many cases, the best motivation is necessity. In Baduk, there is a proverb, "urgent situations inspire ingenious solutions."



Diagram 1

This is a game played by Lee Chang-ho (White) and Choi Myong-hoon (Black) in 1998. The two players are the same age, and Choi was considered one of many possible rivals for Lee at the time the game was played.

As you see, the x-marked black stone is cutting the two ▲-marked white stones, but a ladder is not favorable for White.

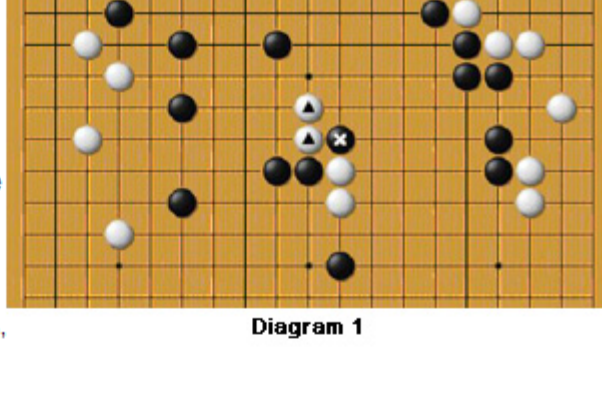


Diagram 1

Besides, the whole white group in the center, including the two ▲-marked stones, is under siege by Black.

It is very likely that White has to allow Black to create a huge territory on the upper side while he struggles for the escape of one part of the group in the center.

Diagram 2

Lee may have felt that ordinary moves could not save the game, and consequently found the moves which helped the center group, and destroyed Black's territory on the upper side as well, namely White 1 and 3.

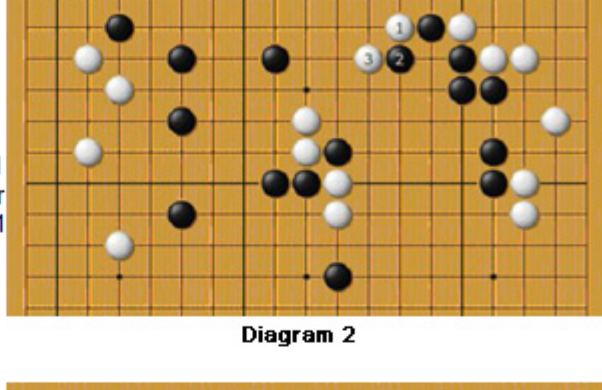


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

It is far easier to understand ingenious moves once they are played.

The meaning of White 1 and 3 in Diagram 2 is that if Black blocks White's connection on the side with 1, then White will capture the ▲-marked black stone with a ladder and save the whole group in the center.

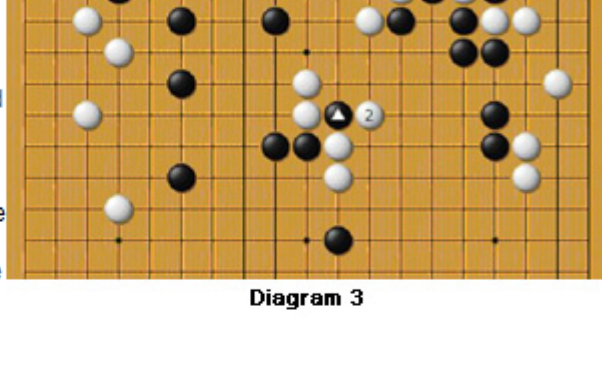


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

Black 1, attempting to break the ladder in the center, doesn't help the situation.

After gaining profit up to 4, White can cause pain to Black again with 6.

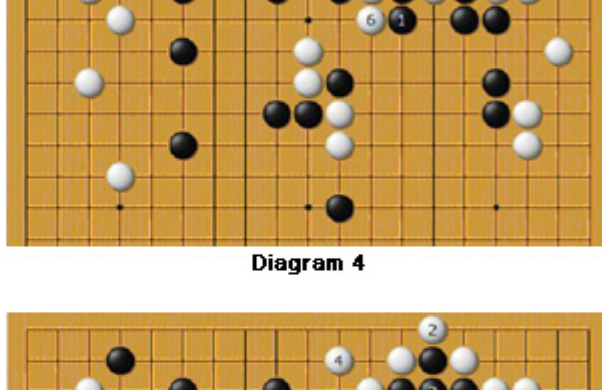


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

Of course, it is impossible for Black to win a game by letting the opponent overcome a crisis with such a favorable result, as shown here.

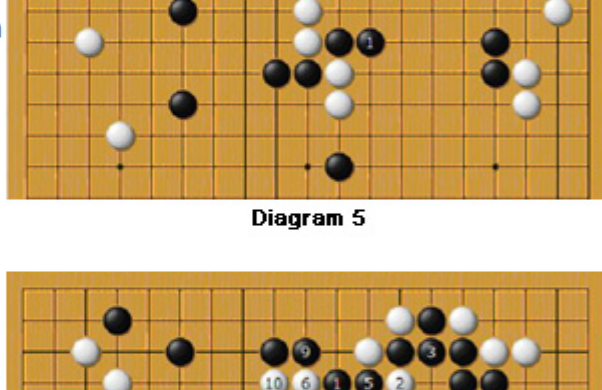


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

The sequence 1 to 10 is what happened in the real game. Although the result is better for Black than the others shown above, it is still unsatisfactory as White saves the center group even in sente.

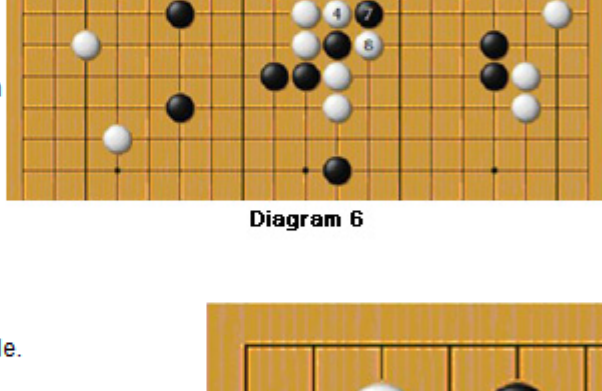


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

Let's look at another example.

Black 1 can look like a big mistake, but it is actually a brilliant makeshift move.

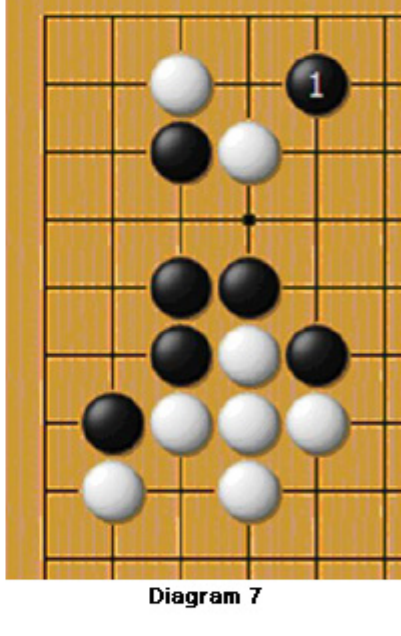


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

The sequence from 1 to 8 would be what normal people can expect.

However, Black's influence is quite humble while White's territory in the corner is substantial, and Black cannot be satisfied with this result.

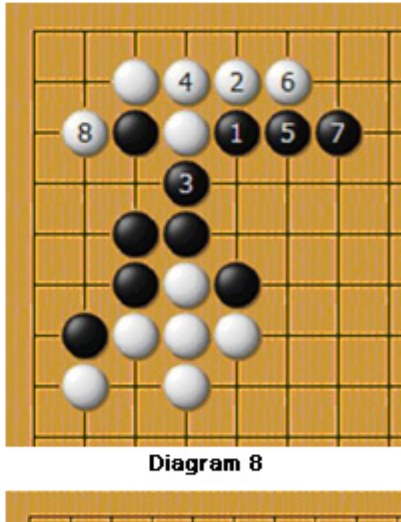


Diagram 8

Diagram 9

If Black wants an influence, this is much better than the one in Diagram 8, all thanks to the smart move Black 1.

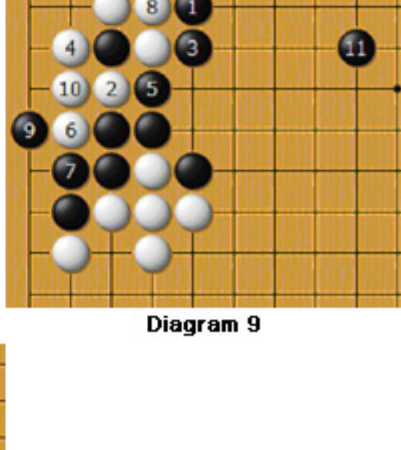


Diagram 9

Diagram 10

Even though White pushes at 2 and tries to make the situation better, the result will be almost the same or even worse.



Diagram 10

If White plays 8 instead of 6, Black will cut at 9, and the same sequence up to 15 will be repeated.

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Lesson 117 : One-Space Jump Downward (1)

There is a saying that a "onespace jump toward center is never wrong." Of course, to jump toward center is usually the fastest way to escape your opponent's attachment, and is also quite difficult to cut.

There is a haengma called a 'cap,' meaning a move made at a point two lines above the opponent's stone to block his advance toward center, which shows the usefulness of jumping toward center.

However, oftentimes, a onespace jump toward the edge of the board can be a good move.

Perhaps this kind move can be introduced under the title 'brilliant move with no name' as in the previous lessons, but here I will follow the term invented by a Korean professional player, Moon Yong-jik.

He names the move 'one-space jump downward' in order to distinguish it from the jump toward center.

Let's start with a very simple example.

Diagram 1

You might have seen this sequence when you studied how to defend your territory from the invasion of a stronger player. Against White's invasion with 1, Black 2, 4, and 6 form the most powerful answer.

After Black 6, either the three white stones on the right side or the ▲-marked stone, or both will be severely pestered by Black.

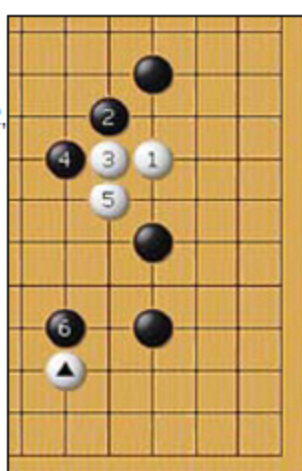


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Even in the case shown above, White has a method to patch up, namely White 3. Thanks to this jump toward the edge, White can have either A or B to secure life on the side.

White 1 is a means to make a cutting point at C, which will help him in fighting with Black.

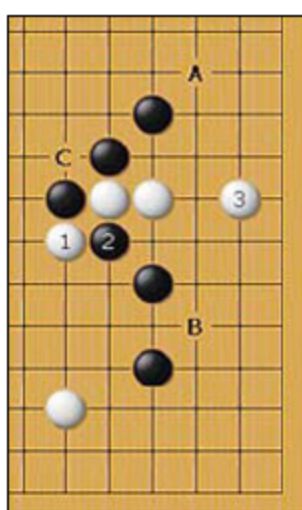


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

The sequence up to Black 9 is one of the variations of a 4-5 point joseki. The problem is how to defend the corner as White.

White 10 is obviously the worst choice. It does not only make Black's shape stronger, but also leaves big trouble at A to White.

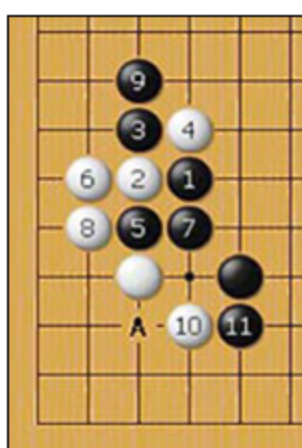


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

White 1 and 3 can be options for securing a sente.

However, as much as White's corner territory strengthens, Black's influence gets stronger as well, so it is not recommendable unless there is an urgent place for White to move.

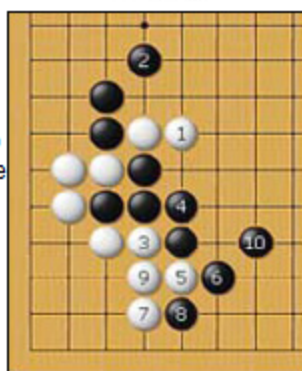


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

The correct move for White is, as you may have already guessed, to jump downward with White 3. Of course now White loses a sente, but sometimes it is better to be in gote than to play bad moves solely for a sente. As you see, after Black plays elsewhere, White can disturb Black's area with A.

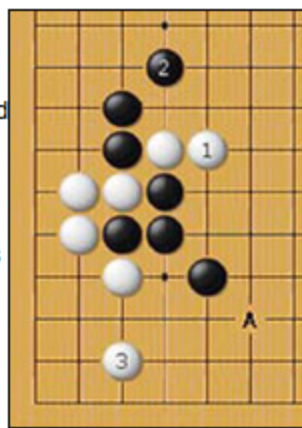


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

This problem is related to a vital point of a shape, but it is also related to a jump downward. Obviously White can save the three white stones by playing at 1. However, owing to Black 1, the corner territory goes to Black.

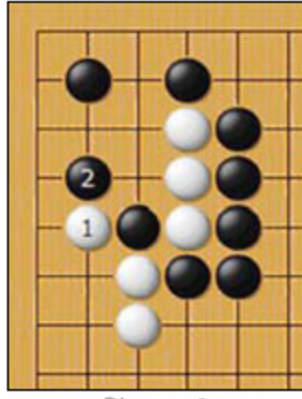


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

You may think the reason why White 1 is good is that the point is the center of three stones. Of course that is correct.

But you can also see this problem as finding the best way to capture the ▲-marked black stone, and then you will see why it is also related to a jump.

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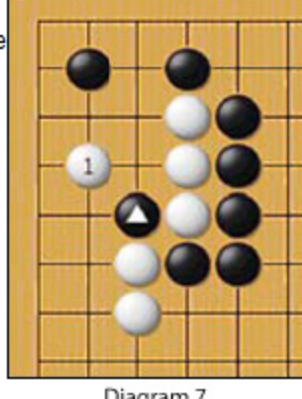


Diagram 7

Lesson 118 : One-Space Jump Downward (2)

In the previous lesson, we saw jumping moves on the second line, which break through unfavorable situations. However, the more usual downward jumps occur on the first line.

Diagram 1

This variation happens when White comes into Black's territory with the ▲-marked stone after this famous 3-4 point joseki is over.

The problem for White is how to prevent Black's endgame in the corner of Black A, White B and Black C. Of course, to play A would be the simplest answer for White, but it is a gote.

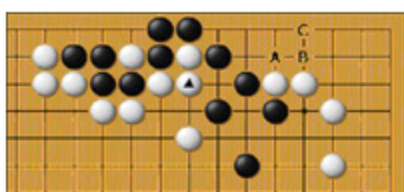


Diagram 2

As you may have already guessed, the correct answer is to jump at 1.

The difference between this move and White A in Diagram 1.

1 is that there remains a possibility for White to make a ko by forcing Black to connect at B with A, and throwing in with C.

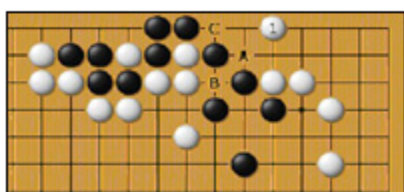


Diagram 3

White's turn to play. The goal is to capture the whole black group in this corner.

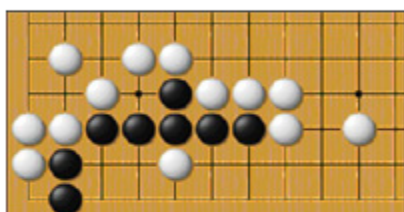


Diagram 4

Of course, the answer is to jump at 1. This combination of a jump on the 1st line and a large knight's move from the ▲-marked stone is a well-known technique to connect the ▲-marked stone along the edge.

In this case, White 1 saves the marked stone and kills the black group at the same time.

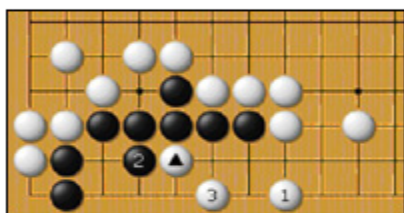


Diagram 5

Although Black plays 2 in order to cut the connection, White can still kill the group by making it a flowerfive shape with 3 and 5.

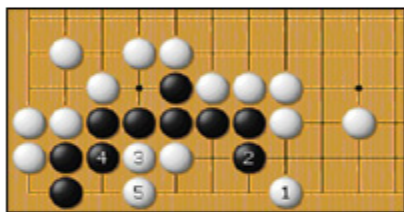


Diagram 6

This is a very similar problem to the last one.

There is a brilliant move to save the two ▲-marked white stones, either by bridging under to the left or capturing the black stone cutting the two marked stones.

Of course, the black group on the left will die as the two white stones are saved.

Be careful, since there are two places where you can jump downward.

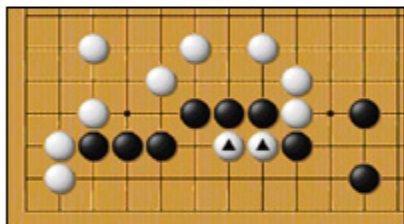


Diagram 7

The answer is to jump at 1. If Black blocks the connection with 2, then White can capture the black stone with the sequence, A to E.

If Black prevents it by playing B instead of 2, White can connect his stones to the left by playing at 2.

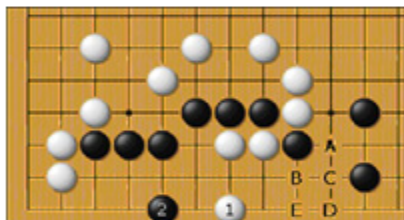


Diagram 8

The characteristic of this problem is slightly different because the answer is a jump not from our side, but from the opponent's.

The goal is to find a good endgame move for White.

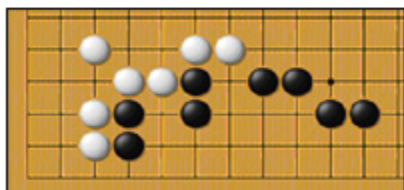
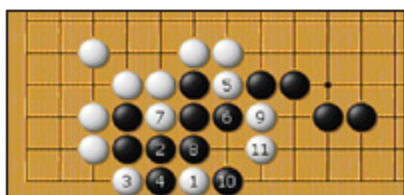


Diagram 9

White 1 is the vital point in this shape. The correct answer for Black against White 1 is 8. If Black insists on capturing White 1, it will end with Black's disaster as shown here, with the sequence up to 11.

It would be a two-point loss for White to simply bend at 3 instead of 1. Black answers the bend by jumping at 1.



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Lesson 119 : Salvation From Outside (1)

Lesson 119 : Salvation From Outside (1)

It is said that one of the difficulties in writing a Baduk-playing computer program is determining the boundary in which it searches for the candidate moves.

In order to do this, the program should be able to differ what is its own force and what is not, what is related and what is not, and what is inside and what is outside, etc.

The reason that a computer should know these things is so that a sea of unlimited moves does not haunt it.

The program will be designed to deliberate only inside of the boundary.

However, sometimes, good moves can be found outside of the situation at hand.

Until now, as far as I know, finding this kind of move is only possible for a human being.

Diagram 1

White just covered the six black stones with 1.

Since six stones are too many to give up, Black has to save them, but how?

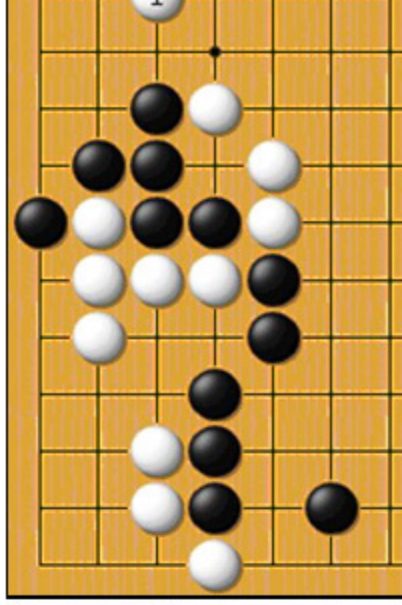


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Obviously Black cannot save the group if he tries to find an optimal move inside the situation.

As shown here, Black 1 and 3 are impotent attempts to escape, that are easily blocked by White 2 and 4.

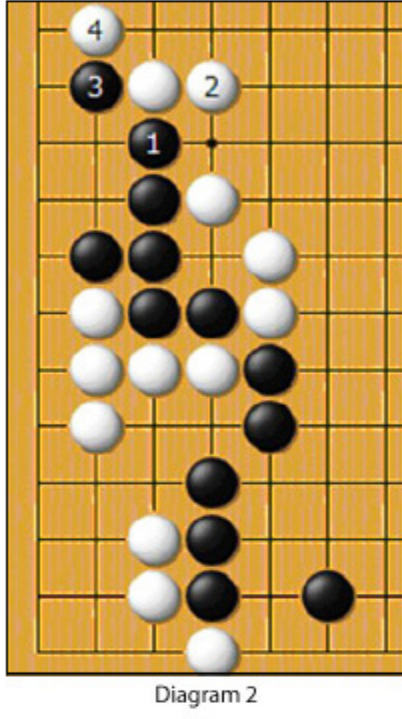


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

To go out with 1 and 3 is not a solution either.

After being cut by White 4, Black cannot fight against White since the five black stones separated on the side have only a few liberties.

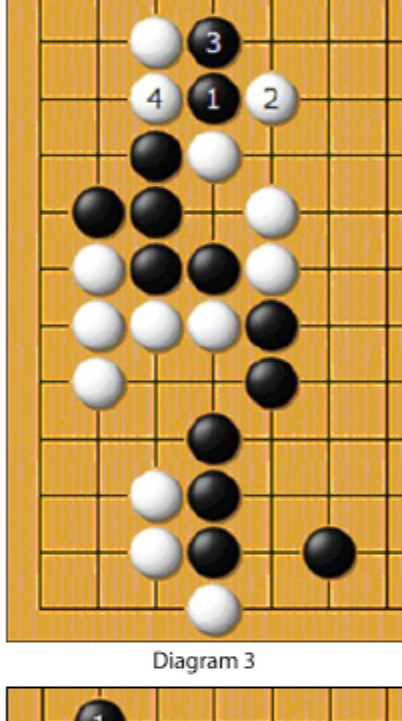


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

As you might have expected, Black 1, which seems to be placed outside the current situation, is an excellent move to save the six stones.

If White plays A, Black will connect under with B.

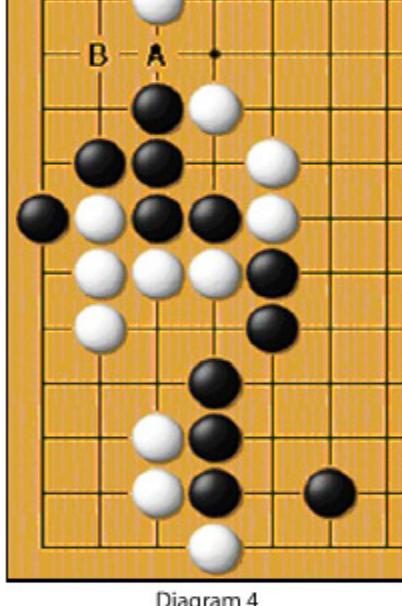


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

If White blocks with 2, Black 3 and 5 will be good moves.

Because of the exchange of Black 1 and White 2, White cannot but go out with A instead of cutting at B, and Black succeeds in escaping.

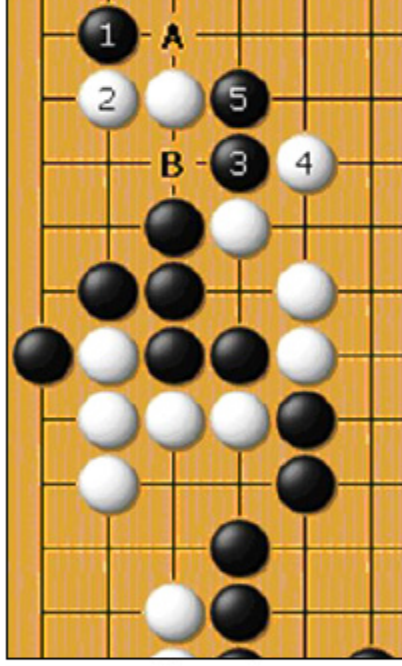


Diagram 5

Diagram 6-1

The black group here cannot live inside, since the space is too narrow.

If he plays A, then White will kill him with B, and if he plays C, then White, D. However, if Black depends not only on the shape of his own group but also the situation he is in, he can save the group.

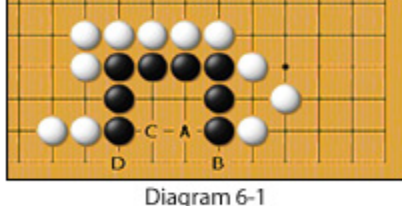


Diagram 6-1

Diagram 6-2

For White, to connect at 1 is the best possible choice.

Of course, Black can still live with the sequence up to 8, but White can capture the three black stones in sente anyway.



Diagram 6-2

If White plays elsewhere with 3, Black will cut there and then White will lose far more than just letting Black live in gote.

Because White has to defend the cutting point at 3, Black C in the previous diagram can be a sente.

Please verify it by yourself.

Diagram 7

The core move is Black 1. After it is played, the rest becomes quite easy.

If White gives atari to it, Black should come down with 3.



Diagram 7

Then, it is apparent that White A doesn't work because Black can easily live by playing C in sente.

Moreover, White B doesn't work because Black C is a sente anyway, which I'll explain later.

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Lesson 120 : Salvation From Outside (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Although I named the moves introduced in the previous lesson as moves from the "outside," perhaps that's because I'm not strong enough to imagine that I can find a good move in an area seemingly not related to the situation at hand.

Anyway, it is true that we can find more examples of brilliant moves in areas located far away from the main action.



Diagram 1

This example is taken from the game played in 1991 between Cho Chi-hoon 9-dan and Takemia 9-dan, who is famous for his cosmic style. Cho, who was Black, played 2 against White 1, giving atari to the $\triangle$ -marked black stone. Of course, Cho knew that his stone was in atari.

Black 2 is not even connected with any black groups. Then, what was the meaning of Black 2?

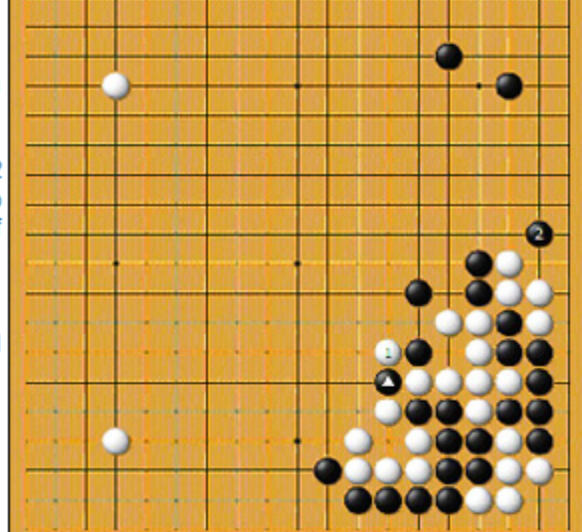


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

If Black extends at 2 against White's atari, White will go out with the sequence from 3 to 9. Even though Black can capture the six white stones on the lower side, White's territory and influence on the right side are too big, making this result quite unacceptable for Black.

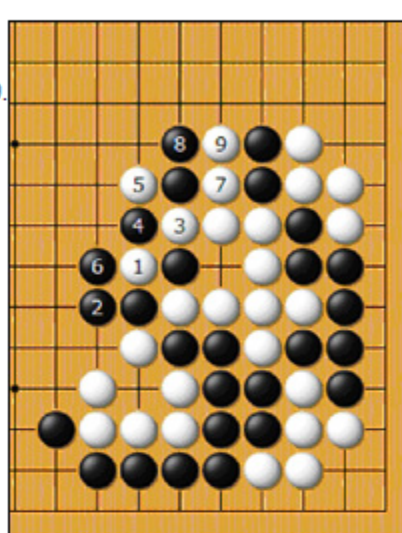


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

Black 1 is, therefore, a move to prevent the unfavorable result in Dia.2. If White comes out with 2, he will fall into Black's trap. The $\triangle$ -marked white stones are all killed by the sequence up to 9.

Please verify it yourself.



Diagram 3

Diagram 4

There is a saying that a ponuki in the beginning is worth 30 points, but it cannot be applied in this situation.

As you see, all the $\triangle$ -marked white stones are killed by Black 3, and the influence made by White 2 is not that powerful.



Diagram 4

Diagram 5

Therefore, White has no choice but to capture the seven black stones on the right side as soon as possible, in order not to be much harassed by Black in the center.

However, the result shown here, where Black can almost cover the center and capture the six white stones on the lower side as well is still far more favorable for Black.

Please compare this with Dia.2.

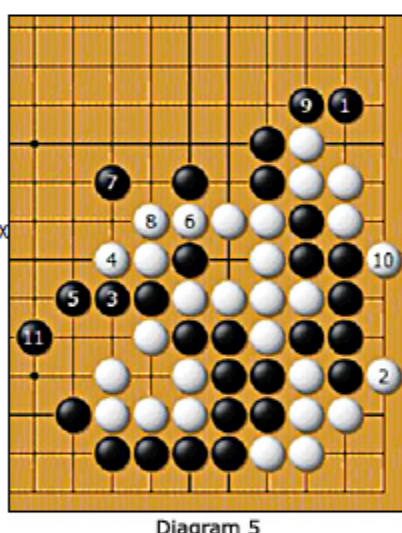


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

This example is less realistic, but interesting enough. It is very simple to recognize that the black group in the corner cannot live as it is.

The key is to use the $\triangle$ -marked stones on the side.

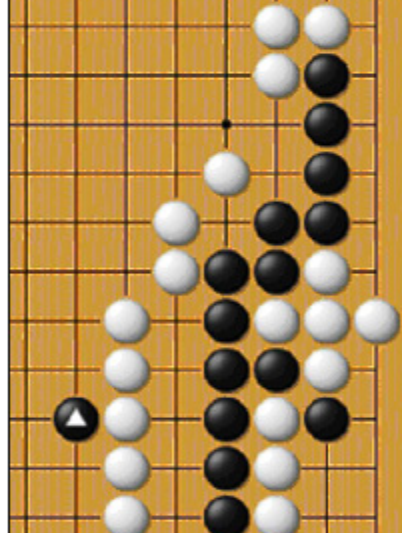


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

Because it is pretty hard to solve this problem even for strong players, let me just show you the correct sequence.

The sequence shown here is inevitable for both. If White plays 7 instead of 6, Black will live inside by exchanging Black A and White B, and playing C.

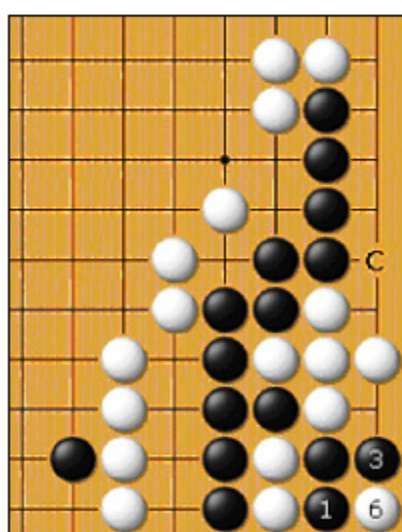


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

After White captures the two black stones with 8 in Dia.7, Black throws in with 1 here, forcing White to take the three black stones with 2.

Black 3 on the first line is a brilliant move which forces White to make two eyes with 2, and lets Black go under with 5 as well.

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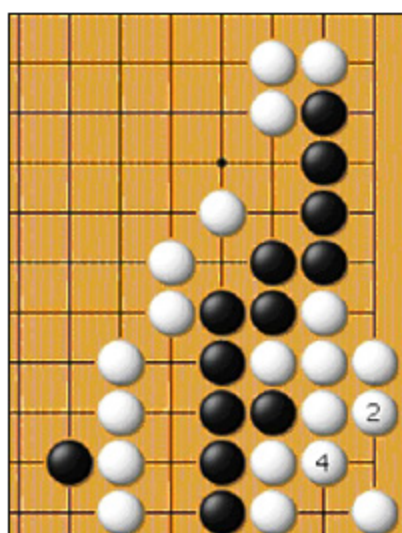


Diagram 8

Lesson 121 : Power of Bend (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

It is often said that a fight begins with a cutting move. Of course a cut, separating the opponent's groups of stones, is tangible evidence for the start of a fight. However, there is usually a bend before a cut. A bend does not initiate a fight as it is, but its power evokes your opponent's eager resistance, which then culminates in a fight. This can also be interpreted in the following way; if your opponent doesn't dare to stand against a bend, you can make him yield under the power of the bend.



Diagram 1

Black's goal is to reduce White's territory on the left side. As Black attaches at 1, White bends with 2, as in the saying, "when being attached, bend." Even though there is another saying "when being bent, extend," it is too meek a move for Black to extend with A or B and let White secure the side along the third line.

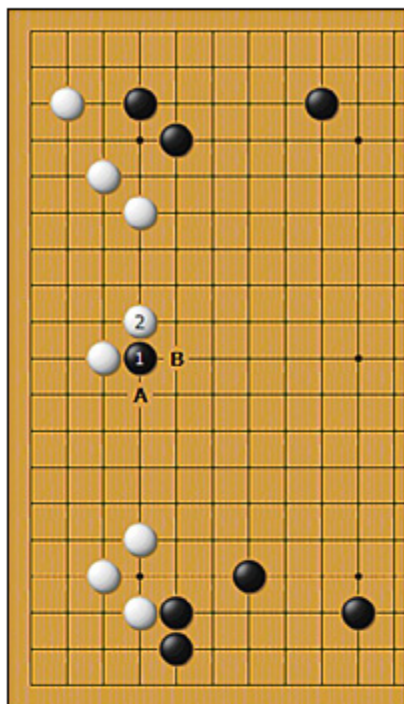


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

As you may have guessed, to bend at 1 is a good move for Black. It induces White to cut with 2 and capture Black 1 with 4. Then, Black can give atari to the x-marked white stone with A, and capture the ja-marked white stone by a ladder with 9. If afraid of White's ladder break, Black also can choose the sequence shown here. Black not only trimmed down White's territory on the side, but also built an influence in the center.

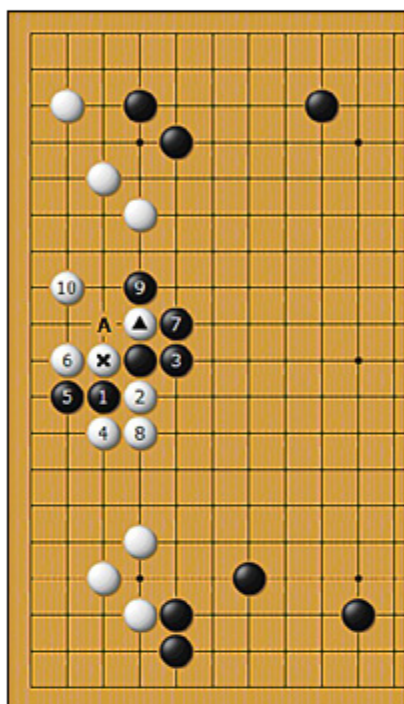


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

If White refuses to connect at 8 in Dia.2 and extends at 2 instead, Black 3 to 7 will put White in trouble. After 7, Black can aim to capture either two white stones on the side with A, or in the center with B.

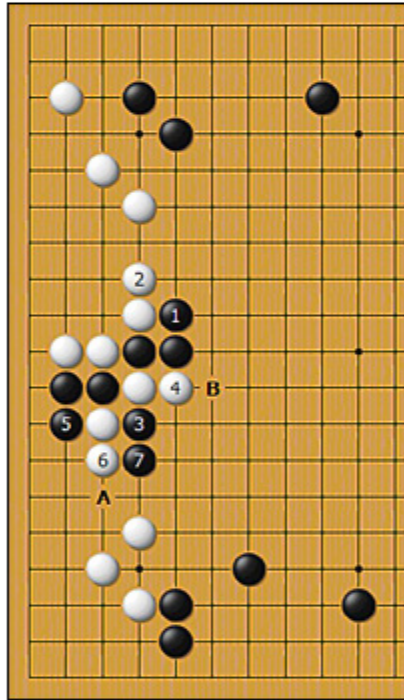


Diagram 3

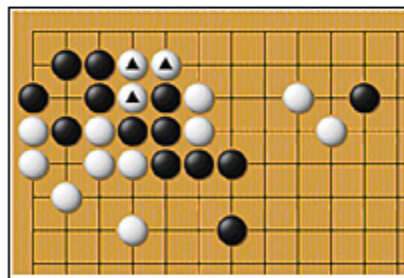


Diagram 4

Diagram 4

Black's goal is much clearer in this problem than in the previous one. The five black stones in the corner are dead as there are, but if Black can capture the three ja-marked white stones, they can be resurrected. How?

Diagram 5

The key move is Black 3, the bend. As you can see, a bend creates many cutting points for both the enemy and the ally, and one of those cutting points can be a clue to breaking through the situation. After Black 3, if White cuts at A, Black will cut at B and capture the three white stones. If White connects at B, then Black will connect at A and capture the whole white group on the left.

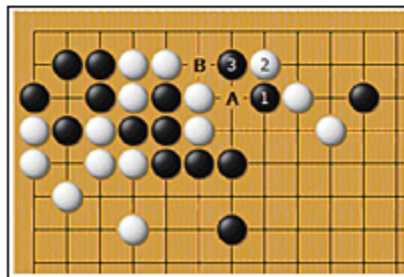


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

White 2 is an attempt to make Black unable to bend with 3, as in the previous diagram. However, now, Black has another brilliant bend in his sleeve, namely Black 5. If Black innocently goes down with 5 at A, White will cut the three black stones in the sequence from B to D. But owing to Black 5, the bend, White cannot cut at D after the exchange of White B and Black C.

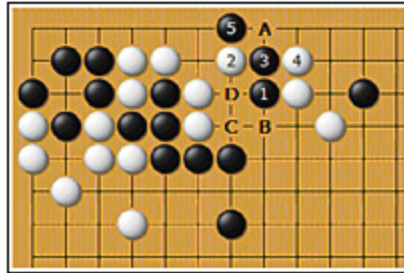


Diagram 6

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Lesson 122 : Power of a Bend (2)

A bend is always a tempting target for your opponent to cut. In other words, you play a bend to lure the opponent into cutting it. It goes without saying that you must be well prepared against the cut.



Diagram 1

This example is taken from a game played between the legendary Dosaku Honinbo (White) and Shunchi Yasui (Black) in 1683. Black attempts to finish the borderline of his territory in the center with 1 and 3. However, Dosaku frustrates Black's effort with an excellent bend.

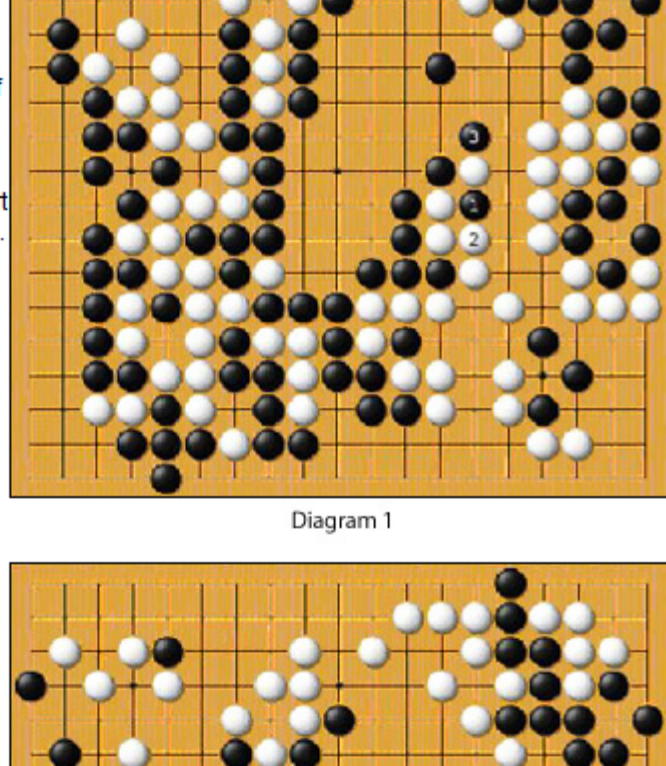


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

All three moves by White shown here are great. Even though there are two cutting points A and B in White's position, neither can help Black to secure the boundary he originally intended.

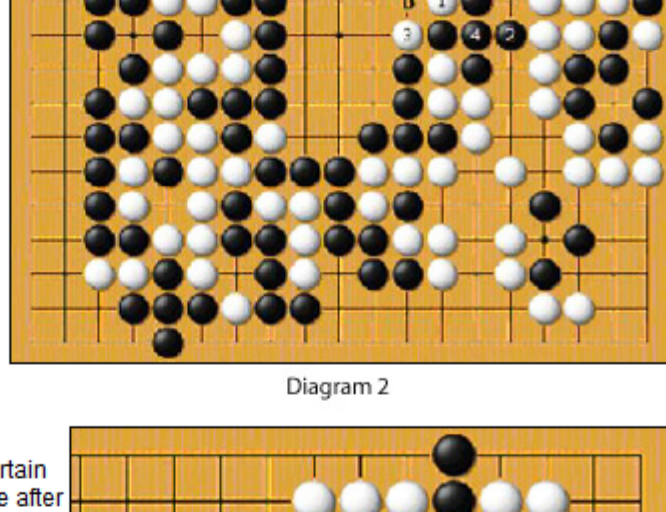


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

It is quite easy to ascertain the brilliance of a move after it is played. If Black cuts at A in Dia.2 to capture the white stones inside his area, the Δ -marked five black stones will be dead.

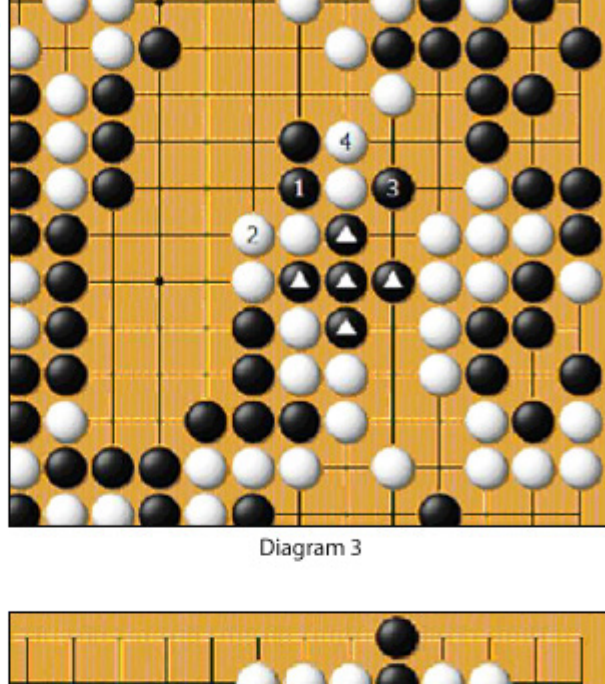


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

Although the result of this sequence is less disastrous for Black, it is still painful. If Black could have anticipated White 1 to 5 in Dia.2, Black wouldn't have played the atari with 3 in Dia.1.

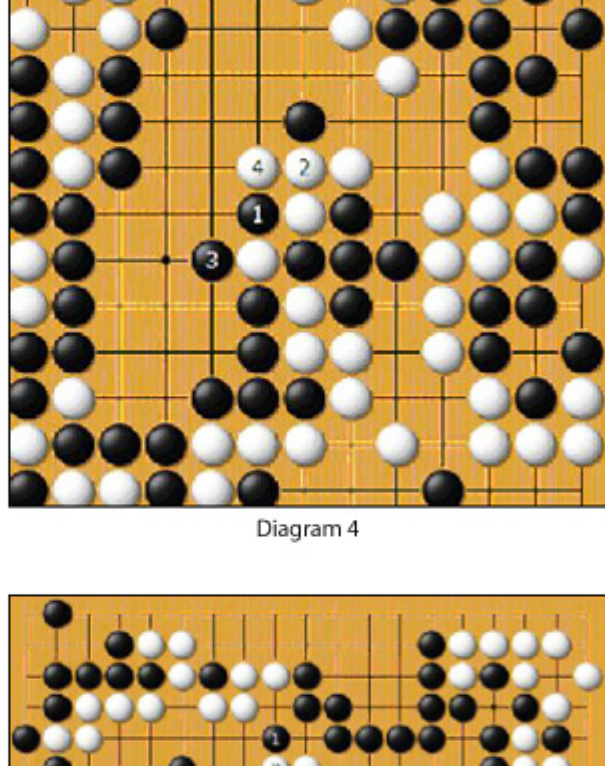


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

This example is also taken from a professional game played by Lee Chang-ho (Black) and Norimoto Yoda (White). Lee is famous for his supremacy in the endgame, and is known to create territory in the center where mediocre players can find only neutral points, meaningless for both Black and White. The sequence following this diagram shows how wonderfully Lee finishes the center to his favor.

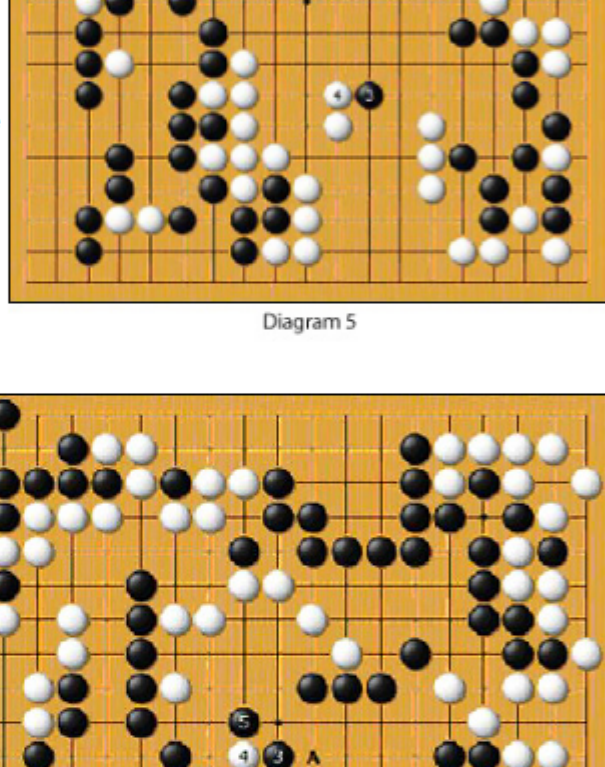


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

From 1 to 5, Lee bends three times in a row, creating three cutting points as the result. Lee exposes them to Norimoto in cool blood. What if White cuts at A?

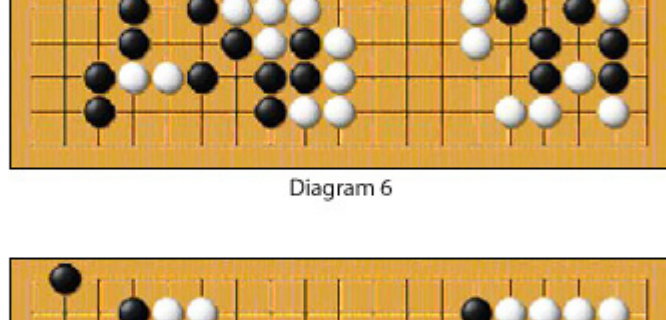


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

As you may have already guessed, if White cuts at 1, the $\blacktriangle$ -marked white stones in the upper center will be trapped by Black 2. To cut at A doesn't improve the situation, but just helps Black save one move for defending the cutting points after White connects his stones at 2 instead of cutting at 1. See how neatly Lee arranges the center with three bends!

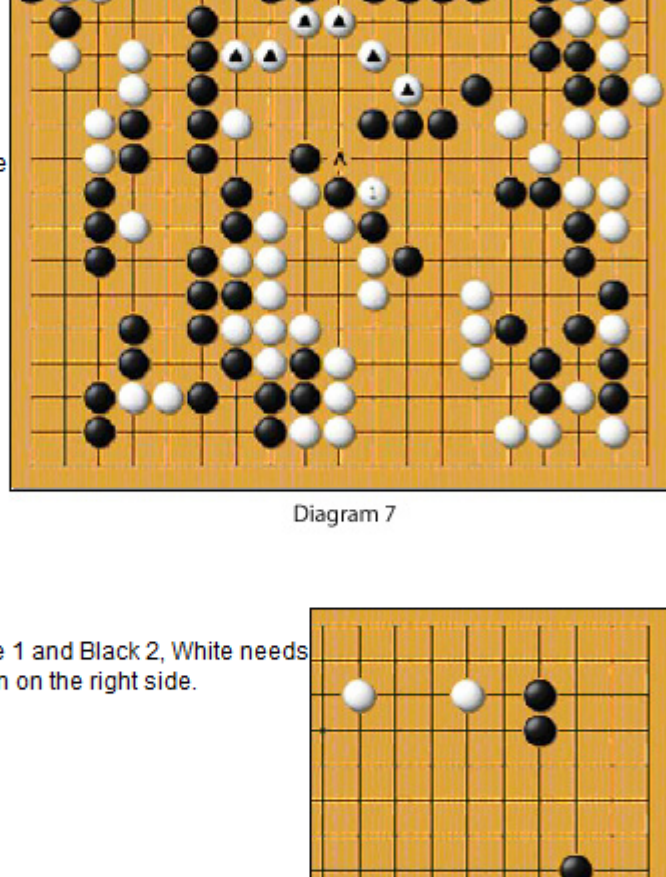


Diagram 7

Diagram 8

After exchanging White 1 and Black 2, White needs to arrange the situation on the right side.

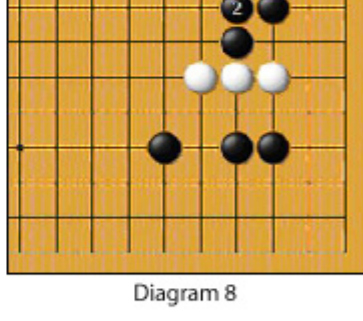


Diagram 8

Diagram 9

However, White's connection at 1 cannot be the answer. As shown, Black easily splits White into two groups, upper and lower, with the sequence 2 to 6.

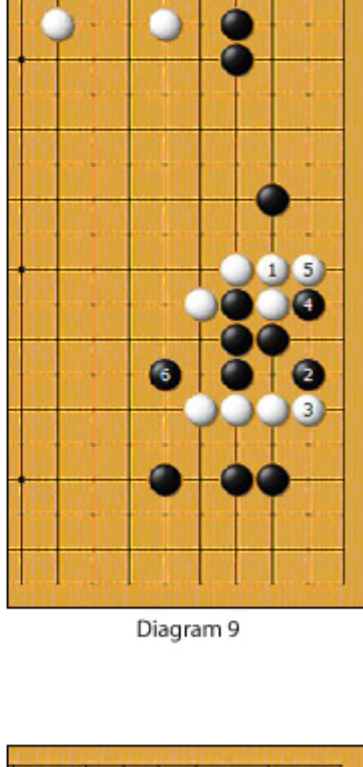


Diagram 9

Diagram 10

Of course, the answer is to bend at 1. Even though there are many cutting points in White's position, it is not a problem for White to be cut by Black. The sequence up to 7 enables White to connect all his stones together, while black stones are concentrated into a big lump. If Black captures the two white stones, White will throw in at 1.

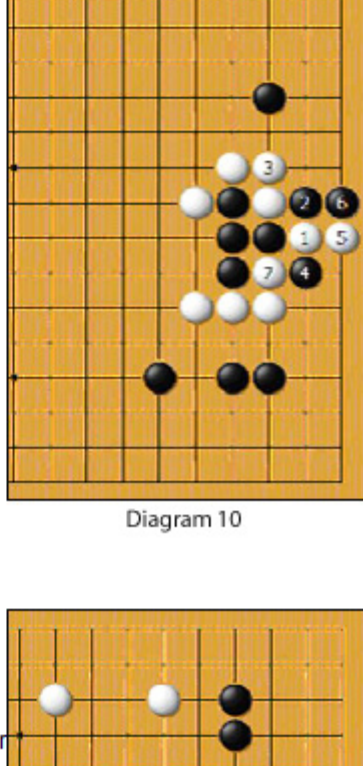


Diagram 10

Diagram 11

Black's cutting at 2 is not threatening either. If Black goes out with A after White 5, White will capture Black 2 with B, and if Black saves Black 2 by connecting at B, White will capture the other four stones with A.

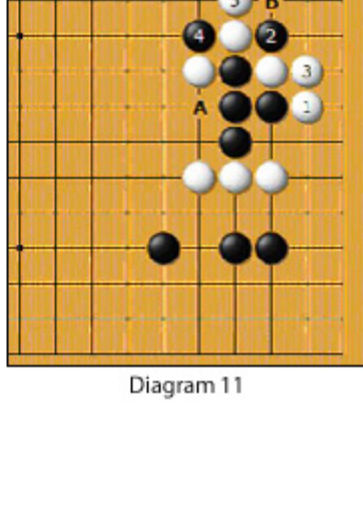


Diagram 11

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Lesson 123: The Power of a Bend (3)

By Nam Chi-hyung

There are many Baduk proverbs about a bend, and "a double-bend creates a liberty" is one of them. It means that a bend is also useful in a capturing race.

Before we go on to see examples of the usage of a bend in a capturing race, let's clarify the difference between a "double-bend" and a "two-step-bend." A two-step-bend means two successive bends occurring in the same line of play, like a "two-step-ko." The second bend is dependent on the first bend.

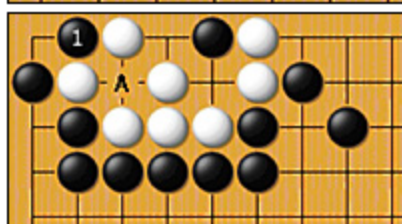
Diagram 1

Black 2 and 4 compose a "double-bend" against White's attachment at 1 and the bend at 3. Black's bend with 4 cannot exist without the bend with 2.



Diagram 2

Black 1 is the first step of the "two-step-ko" in the corner. The ko with A follows the winning of the ko with 1.



In contrast, in a "double-bend" or a "double-ko," the bends and the kos do not occur in the same line of play.

Diagram 3

As White captures Black A with 1, Black captures White B with 2. Thus, the two kos are happening in the same situation and are related to each other, but each ko can be fought regardless of the other ko's existence.

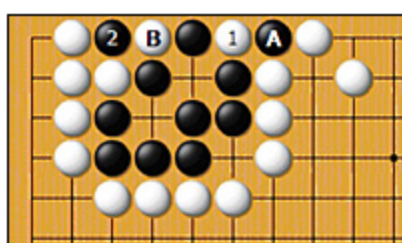


Diagram 4

Here is an example of a "double-bend." As in the above-mentioned proverb, Black can create an additional liberty with a "double-bend" and win the capturing race where White has 4 liberties (x-marked points), compared to the 3 that Black has (▲-marked points) at the moment.

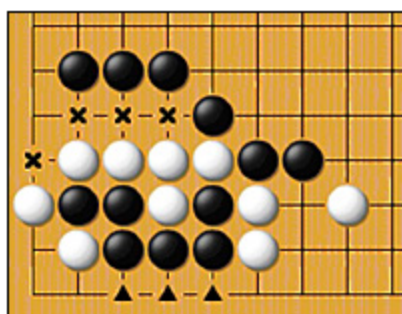


Diagram 5

Black 1 and 3 compose a "double-bend" here. As you can see, these two bends are not physically connected with each other, but allow Black to win the race.

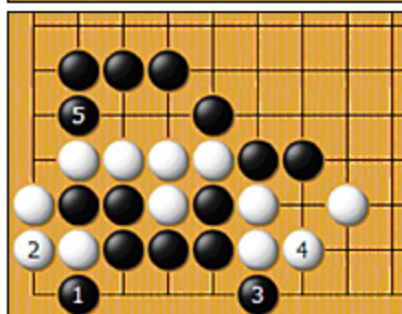


Diagram 6

When White plays 1, it is important for Black to fill White's liberty with 2. If Black captures White 1, it turns into a ko by White B. White cannot play A right after Black 2 to lessen Black's liberties, but has to play B first.

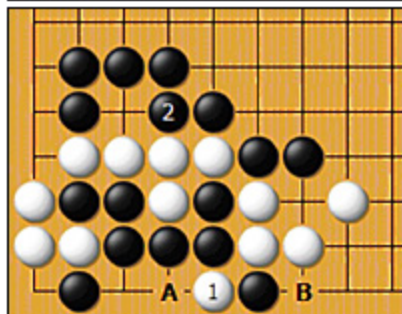


Diagram 7

Let us look at an example from an actual game. This took place in the game between Changho Lee (B) and Satoru Kobayashi (W) in 1997. Now it is White's turn and the groups of Black and White on the lower side are struggling to kill each other.

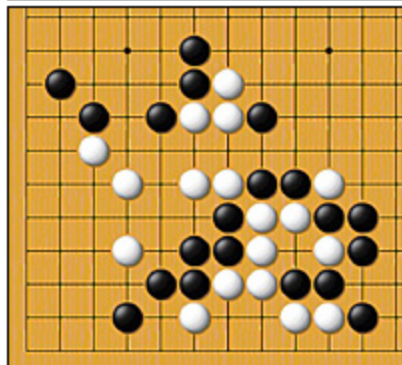


Diagram 8

The complicated sequence here shows that White loses the fight. (The actual result is a ko, which is quite unfavorable for White. Please verify the result yourself.) The reason why White loses the fight is that White omits a bend.

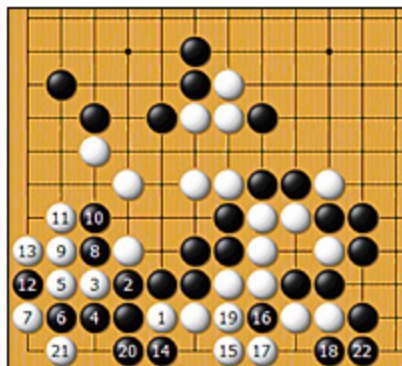


Diagram 9

A simple bend at 1 changes the situation 180°. The sequence from White 3 to 23 is the same as the sequence from 1 to 21 in Dia.8. However, here, Black has to play 24 before connecting at 1 to make White's eye at 18 false. This is the power of White's bend at 1. Owing to this one move, the black group is captured by White. To save the group, Black should ignore White 1 and seek a living in the corner. Then, White will also live on the side by giving an atari at 2.



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Lesson 124: Coupon Baduk

By Nam Chi-hyung

There is a modern mathematical field called "Combinatorial Game Theory" that has been successful in finding the optimal solutions for various games. The games studied in combinatorial game theory are mostly two-person perfect-information games, especially those for which classes of positions for winning strategies can be stated explicitly, or at least proved to exist.

Examples include not only simple games like "Dots and Boxes," but also the most complicated game of all, Baduk.



Coupon Baduk, the topic of this lesson, is a sort of mathematical tool to learn the thoughts of professionals, about the size of the largest play at any time, and to quantify the sizes of specific moves, particularly toward the end of the game. It was devised by Elwyn Berlekamp, who has been a professor of mathematics and of electrical engineering/computer science at UC Berkeley since 1971, and who is better known to Baduk players around the world as the author of Mathematical Go.

The idea of Coupon Baduk is to compel the players to make quantitative decisions. The special device involved in playing Coupon Baduk is a stack of coupons. In other words, it's a Baduk game accompanied by a stack of coupons. The value of the coupons is uniformly spaced and they are sorted by descending value, with the most valuable coupons first. For example, there can be coupons with the values ranging from 10 to 0.5 in 0.5 point decrements.

At each turn, players may choose to take the top coupon, which will be added to his score at the end, OR he may instead make a play on the board. As usual, the game ends when all the coupons are taken and neither player wants to play any longer on the board. The result is decided by comparing the scores each player got on the board, plus the total of all the coupons he has taken.

The first game of Coupon Baduk was played in 1998 by Jiang Jujo and Rui Naiwei, the famous professional 9-dan couple. The games played by these two professionals provided documentation of expert opinions bounding the sizes of the moves they played, and in some cases, the mathematical techniques and theorems involved presented new information previously unknown to even the professionals.

Of course, while it is far too hasty to say that mathematics will conquer Baduk, its realm is steadily growing. Evidence of such improvement can be seen in that Prof. Berlekamp is coming to Korea to hold a Coupon Baduk tournament with promising young Korean professionals. It is scheduled between Nov. 28-29 with 6 prominent professional players including Sanghoon Hahn, the most famous 1-dan in the world after becoming a finalist for the LG Cup along with Sedol Lee 9-dan. This tournament is expected not only to provide many precious records, but also offer a good opportunity for Koreans to become familiar with the mathematical approach to Baduk.

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Lesson 125 : Opening Evolution (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

An opening formation is a patterned sequence of moves in the opening stage. Since it is usually composed of josekis, people often have difficulty in understanding the difference between an opening and a joseki. However, the opening formation is a much larger concept, composed of not only josekis, but also extensions, enclosures, etc.



In Baduk history, there have been a lot of famous opening formations, such as the "New Opening," "Shusaku's Opening," "Three-Star Formation," "Chinese Opening" and many more. They were extremely popular when first invented, and some of them are still the objects of professional study. Their frequent use in many games at the time can be explained, not only by the players' preference of new things, but also by the logics guaranteeing their power and efficiency.

However, they are not insurmountable, and players have been trying hard to build new methods in order to overcome the dominant formations. I want to call this kind process in which an opening formation is invented and modified by new ideas, the evolution of a formation. The main structure stays the same, but each part keeps changing and developing.

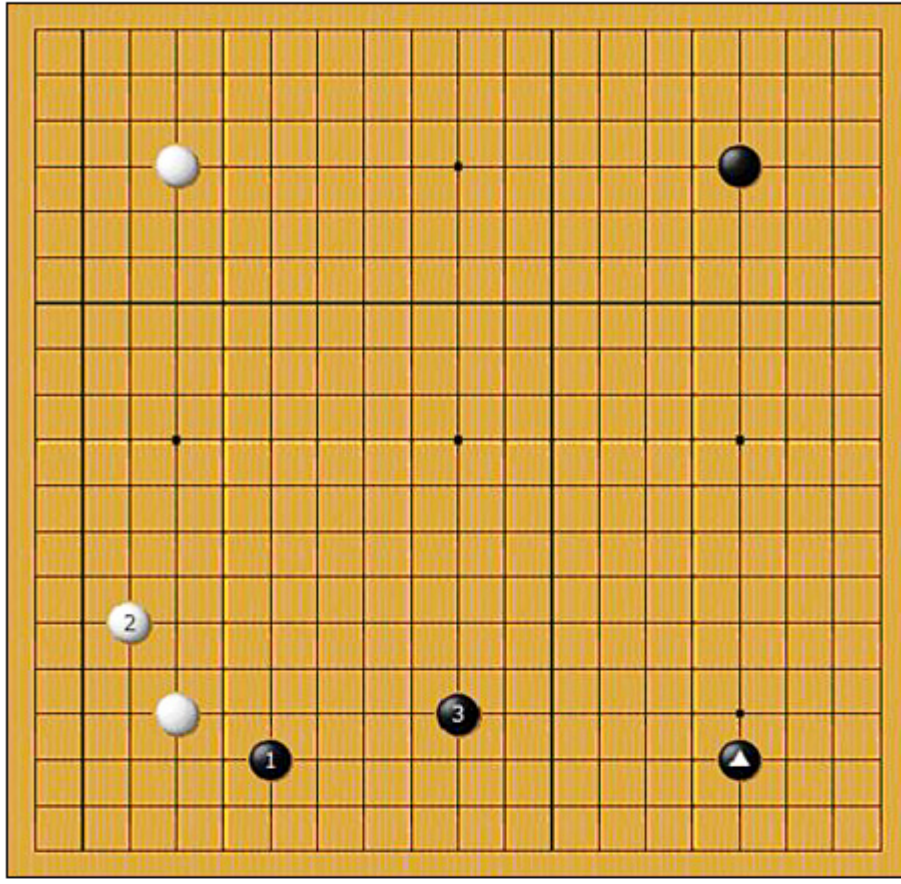


Diagram 1

Black's formation on the lower side, composed of Black 1, 3 and the $\triangle$ -marked stone, is the famous Kobayashi Opening. As you see, there is no way for White to approach from the lower side, and he has to approach the $\triangle$ -marked stone from the right.

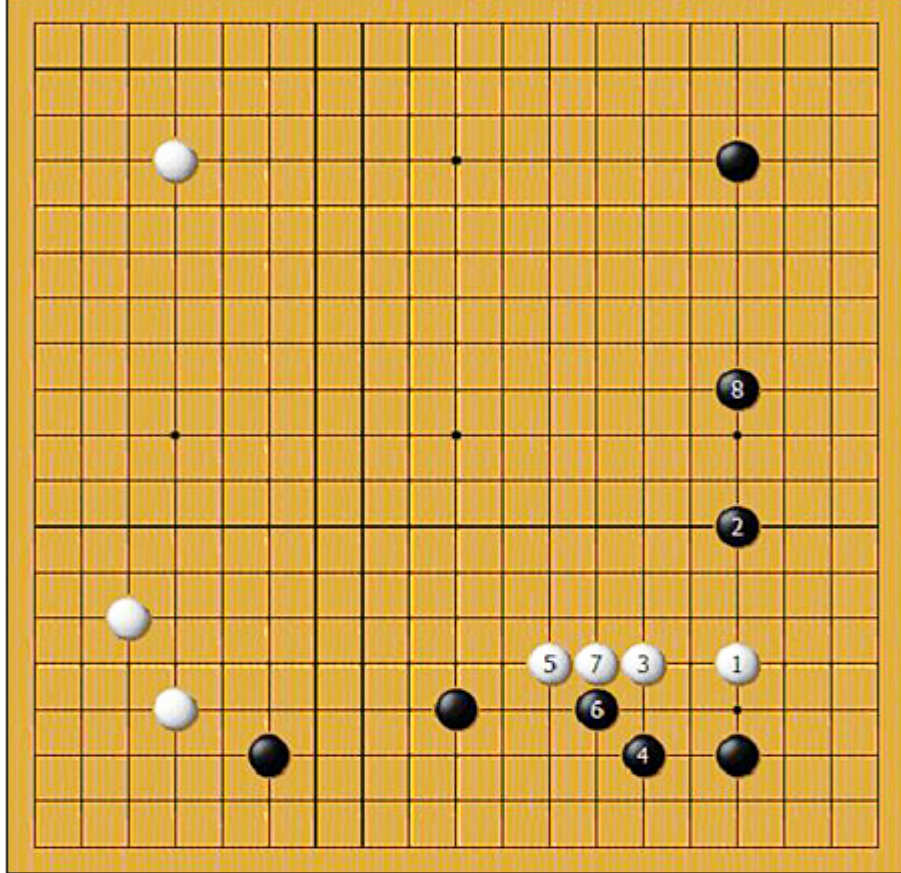


Diagram 2

However, White's one-space high approach is what Black wants. Black's pincer with 2 is a powerful attack in this situation. While White is running out toward the center, Black secures the lower side by peeping at 6 in sente, and turns to the right side with 8, forming a territorial framework.

Now, it is not difficult to know that the result of Dia.2 is much more favorable to Black. However, when this formation was first introduced, though feeling that something was wrong, players holding White didn't realize where the undesirable result came from. Since an opening is a mixture of various technical concepts, it is always helpful to examine as many things as possible. In this case, the answer was the way of the approach.

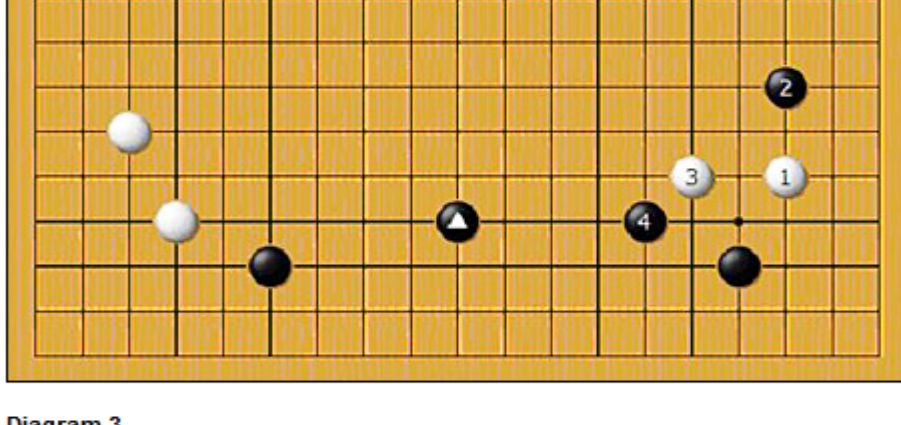


Diagram 3

However, the result is almost the same even if White tries a one-space low approach. Again, Black's pincer with 2 is a good move. As you see, the combination of Black 4 and the $\triangle$ -marked black stone is helping Black perfectly to make a strong territorial framework on the lower side, and the two White stones 1 and 3 have to seek safety without making a substantial profit.

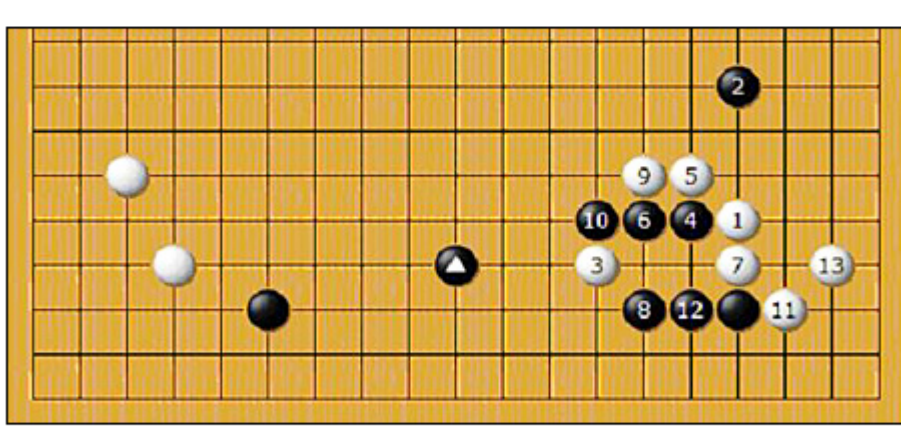


Diagram 4

Changing the joseki doesn't help either. Still the $\triangle$ -marked stone is correctly positioned, and the joseki itself ends up with White's gote.

Dia.5

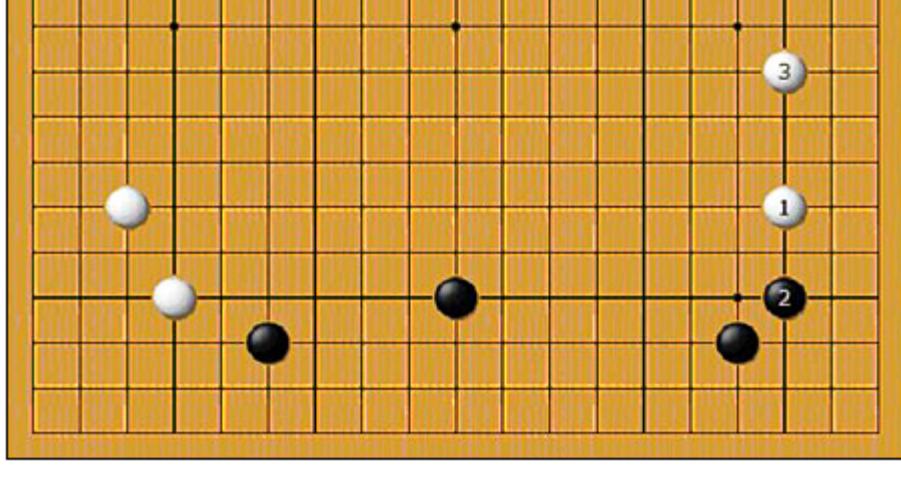


Diagram 5

The answer, which overwhelms Black's intention, is actually simpler than we thought, namely White's two-space low approach. Compared to the weak white group in Dia.2 helping Black to build territory on the lower and the right sides, here White easily gets enough space to extend and doesn't allow Black to strengthen the lower side.

It is surprising that it took players such a long time to find this plain method to avoid Black's blade, but maybe that's the nature of an evolution.

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Lesson 126 : Opening Evolution (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

The selection of a joseki depends heavily on the circumstance. The meaning of this sentence is not as simple as it appears. In a certain circumstance, even a joseki, which has been discarded for a long time can be revived.

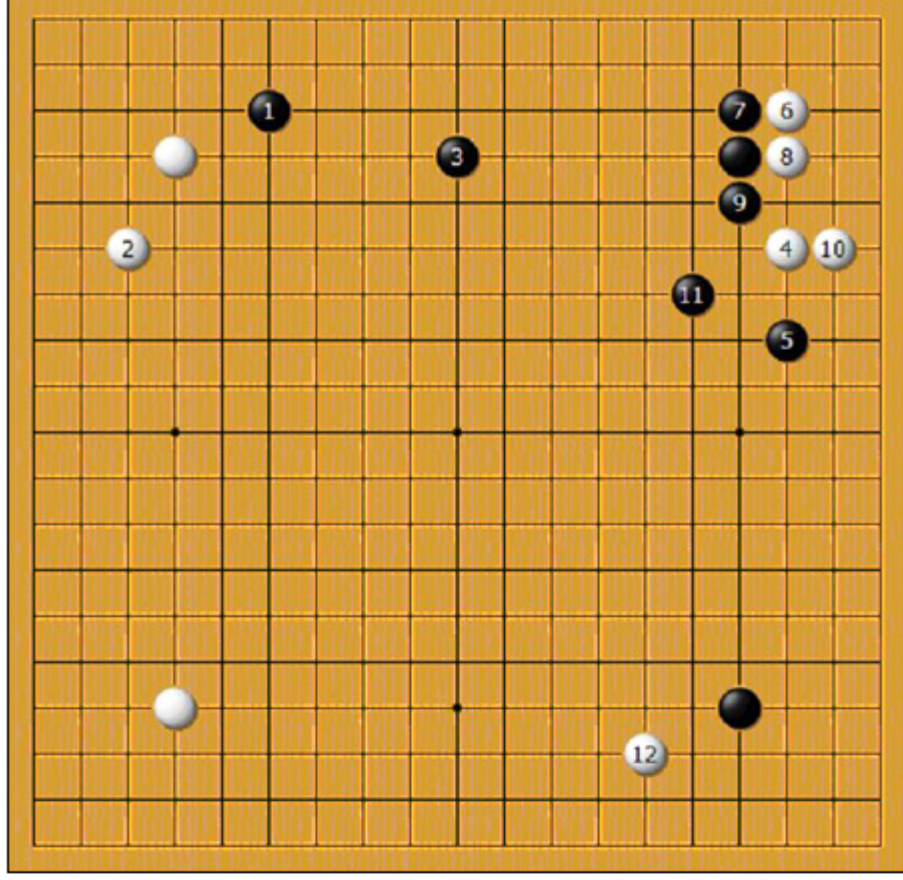


Diagram 1

Black's two-star formation on the right side, and the moves Black 1 and 5, are often used to build up a large framework on the upper side. White's approach with 4 is one of the most often used moves and so is the joseki choice of Black with the pincer as corresponding to the original intention to make influence on the upper side. Of course, the resulting position up to 12 cannot be said to be bad for White, but it is not satisfactory to do what the opponent wants. This kind discontent makes White think up something new, which can substitute for White 2.

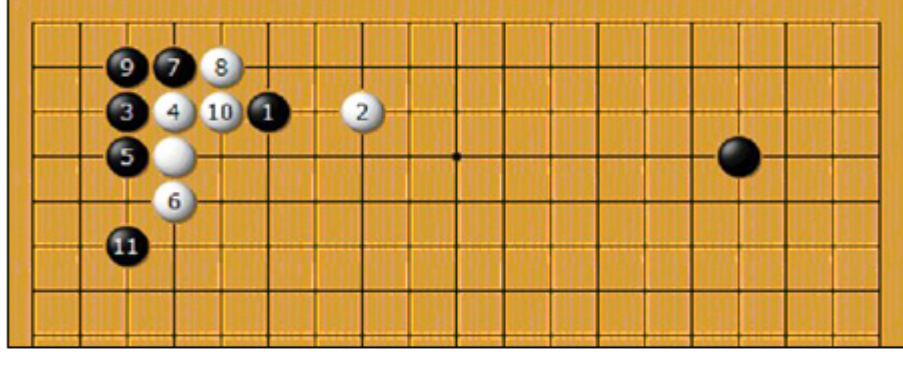


Diagram 2

White's pincer with 2 is the best way so far to prevent Black from constructing framework on the upper side. The interesting part of this is the fact that the result of this joseki has been considered to be unfavorable for White for a long time, because White 2 is too close to the strong White's wall so as to be over-concentrated. In the past, a pincer like White 2 was played only when there was an ally on the other side, as we've seen in the upper right corner of Diagram 1. However, right after players started playing this pincer to adjust to the present circumstance, namely to stop the apparent intention of the opponent, they became conscious of its real value. That's the reason why you can encounter this joseki in many professional games nowadays.

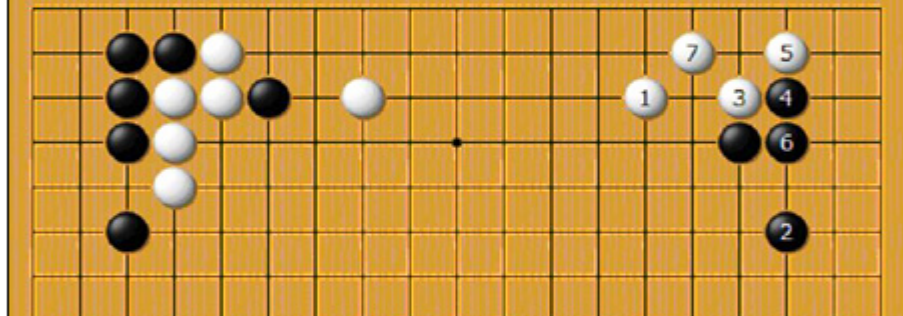


Diagram 3

Other discoveries followed. The joseki in the right-hand corner has been seldom used before. However, this joseki was found to be well matched with White's position on the left.

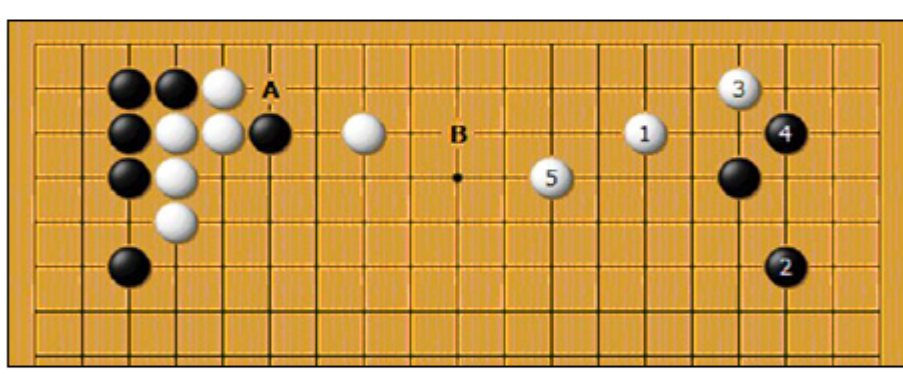


Diagram 4

The joseki variation shown in Diagram 3 started to be played because White 3 and 5 here leave holes at A and B. Because of these two weak points, White cannot secure territory on the upper side without additional protecting moves.

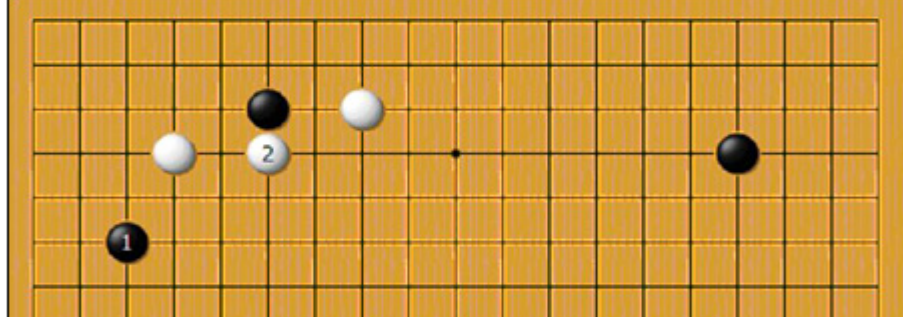


Diagram 5

Now, it's time for Black to change. Double-approach with Black 1 is most often used in this situation. White 2 is the correct answer, although there are other options too. I will not include the variations following White 2 here, since there are so many.

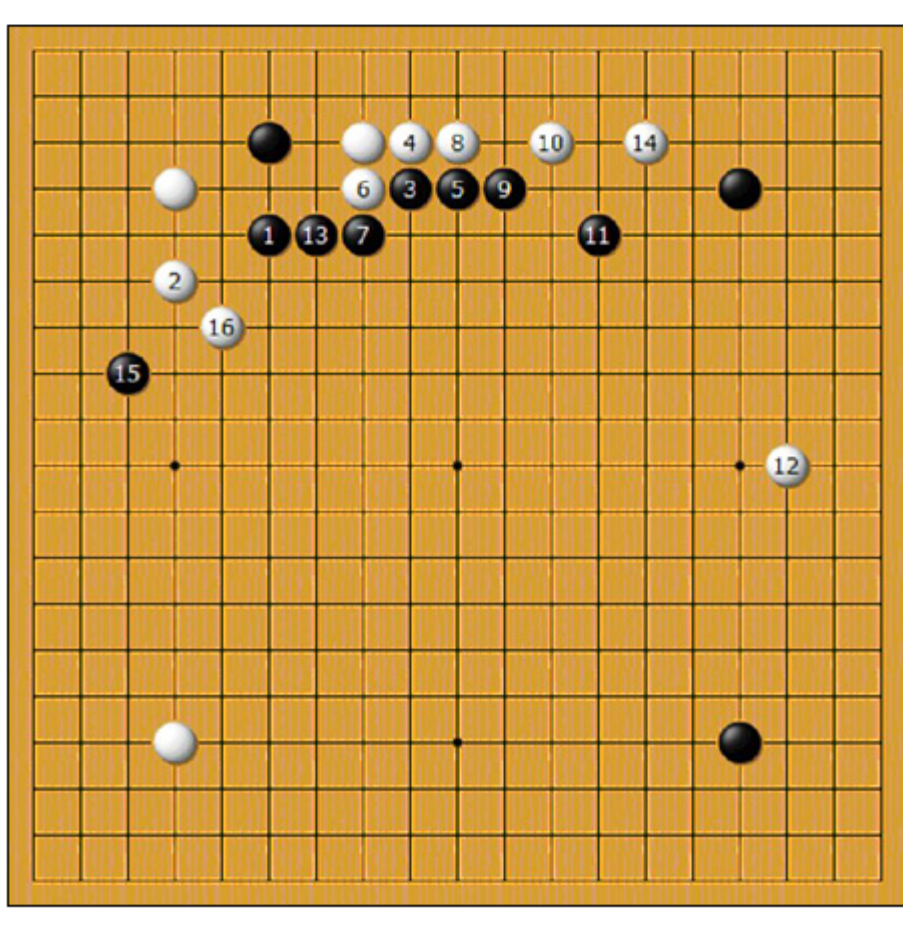


Diagram 6

Black doesn't like to let White make a large framework on the upper side, and so he plays the sequence from 1 to 11. After the position on the upper side is temporarily settled down, it's good for White to divide the right side with 12. Even though Black doesn't have any tangible territory yet, the overall situation is not unfavorable for him as he is able to attack White's weak stones in the upper left corner with 15.

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Lesson 127: Opening Evolution (3)

By Nam Chi-hyung

People often think that an opening does not belong to the realm of reading, but rather a skill to memorize. They choose an opening formation without any specific reason, and follow a joseki sequence automatically. However, as in all other phases of a Baduk game, there is logic to follow, also in the opening. Let's see how an opening develops according to logic with a simple example.

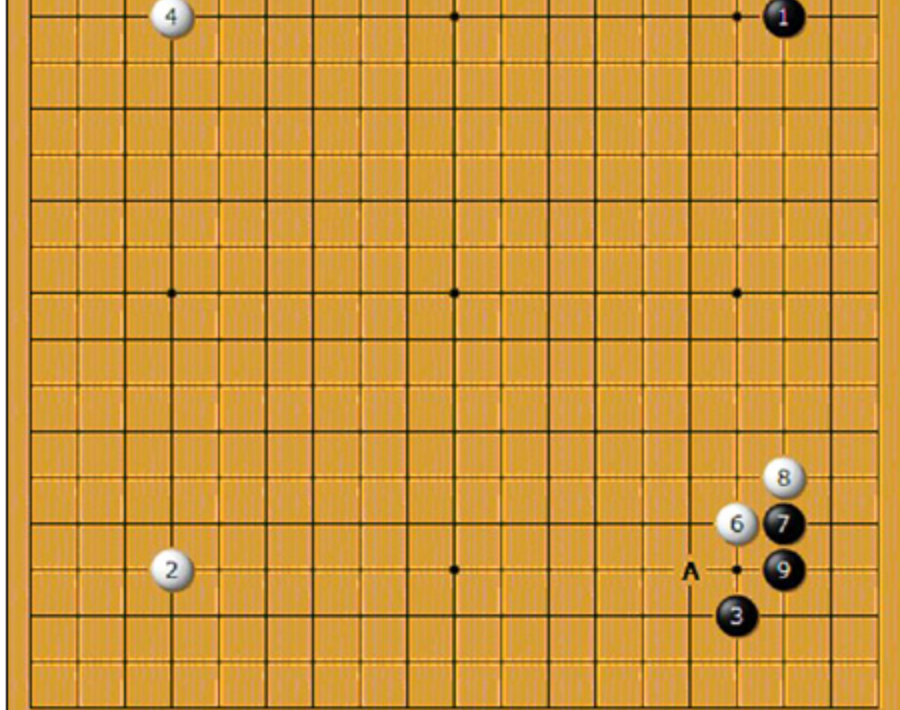


Diagram 1

The opening with Black 1, 3, and 5 is the well-known 1-3-5 opening of Shusaku. It is said that Shusaku never lost a game with this opening. At that time, White approached at 7 as a rule, and Black answered with A, the famous Shusaku's diagonal. Times have changed, and in the modern games, White usually approaches with the one-space high approach, and the joseki sequence up to 8 is most common. The question is where should White's next move be?

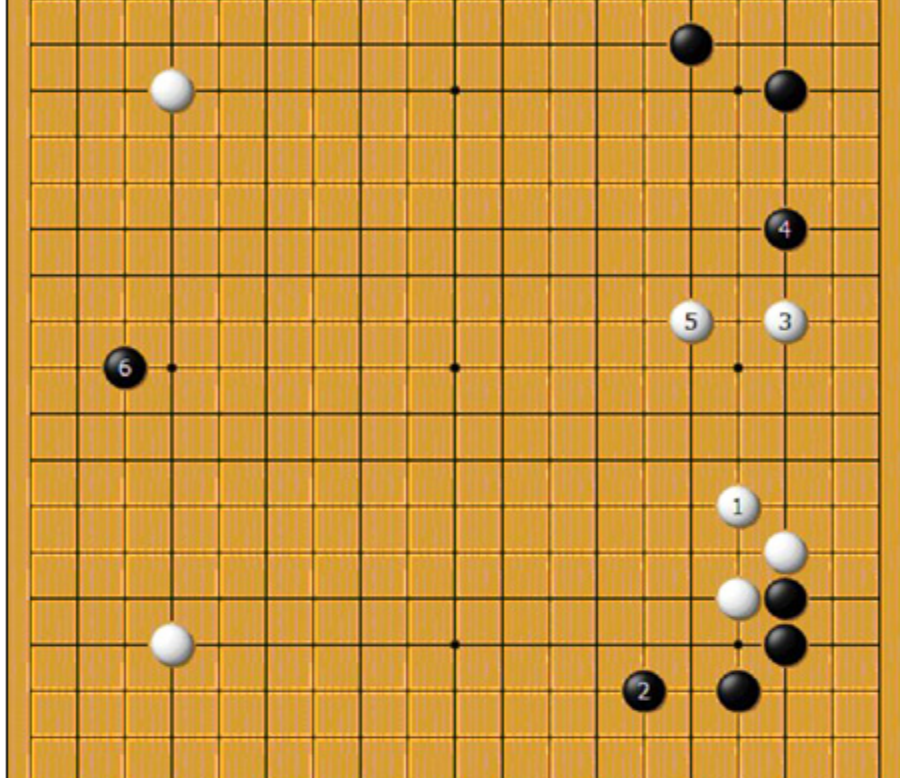


Diagram 2

When this opening was first introduced, the most often played move by White was White 1 here. After the joseki sequence of Black 2 and White 3, Black 4 is a good move to extend his framework in sente, and to go to the left side with 6.

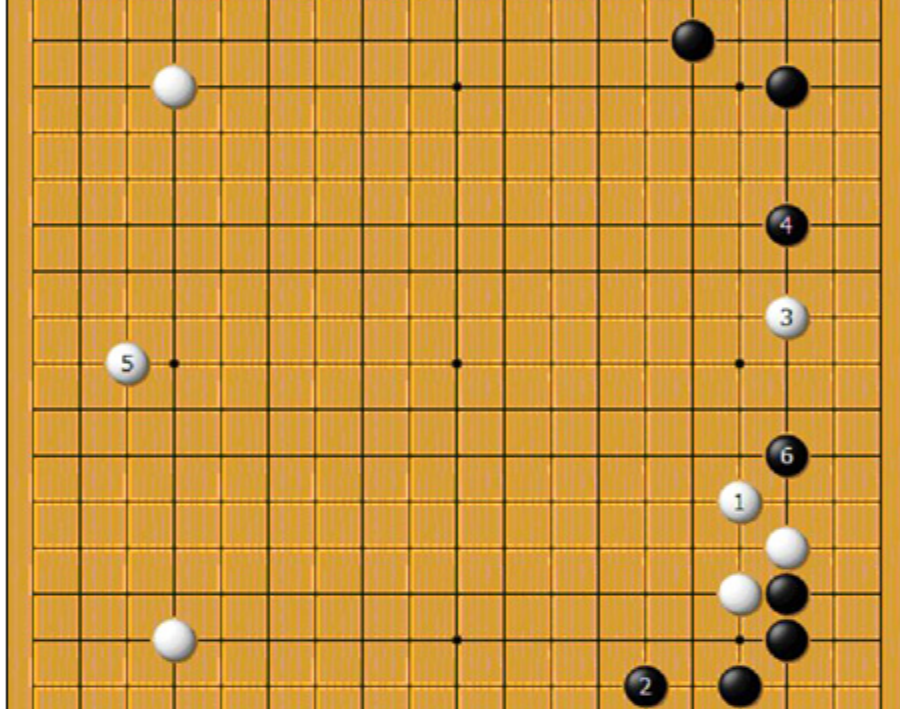


Diagram 3

It is true that the result of Diagram 2 isn't unfavorable at all for White, and the overall situation is well balanced, but Black got what he originally intended anyway and occupied many important positions with quick moves. Therefore, White might want not to defend the right side with 5 as in Dia.2 but to develop the left side as shown here. Then, however, Black will come in with 6.

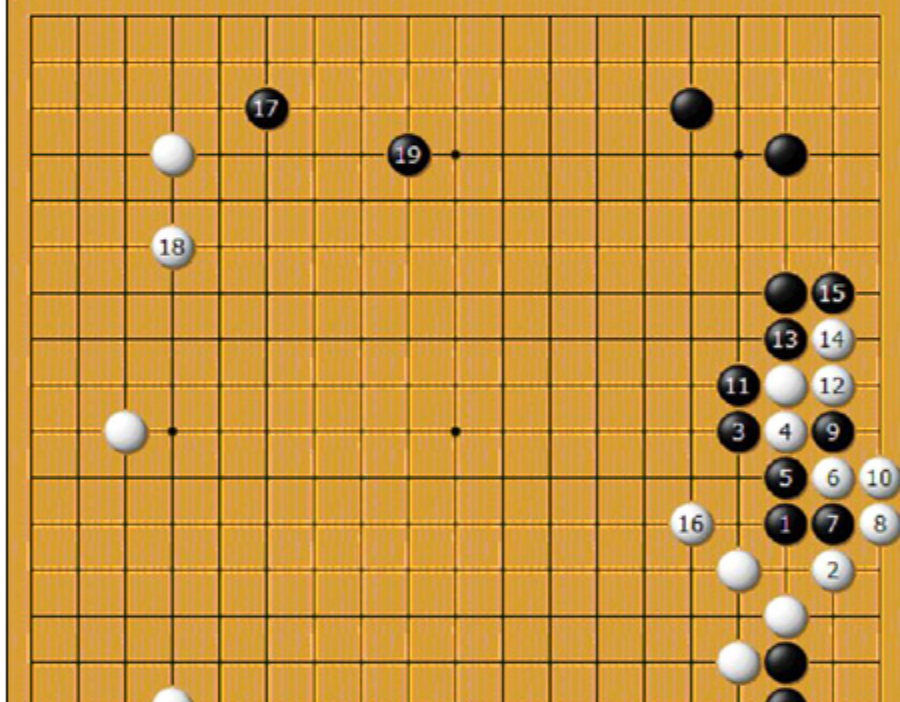


Diagram 4

The sequence Black 1 to 19 is the most commonly played one. Again, this is not so bad for White. However, again this is exactly as Black originally planned, and his framework in the upper right corner and the upper side is quite huge and powerful.

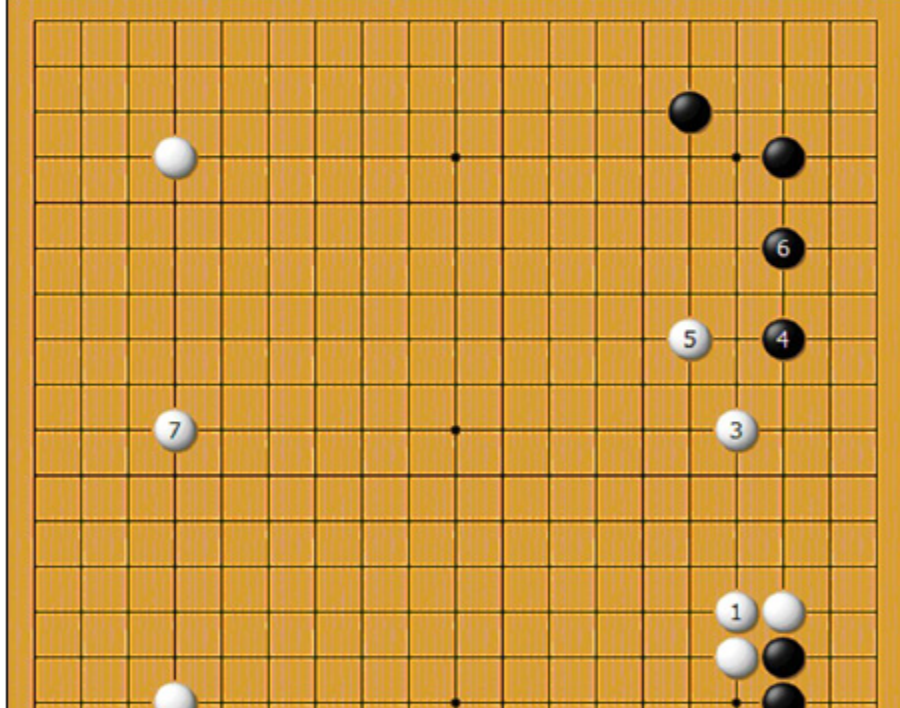


Diagram 5

As players came to realize that they could not frustrate Black's intention with the tiger's mouth shown before, they started connecting solidly with 1 here. The difference between this connection and the tiger's mouth is that White can play the high extension with 3. Owing to this high extension, now White can answer with 5 against Black 4, even in sente, and develop the left side with 7. Although it is not easy to say that this result is better for White than the other two shown in Diagram 2 and Diagram 4, one thing is certain; White position looks more active here.

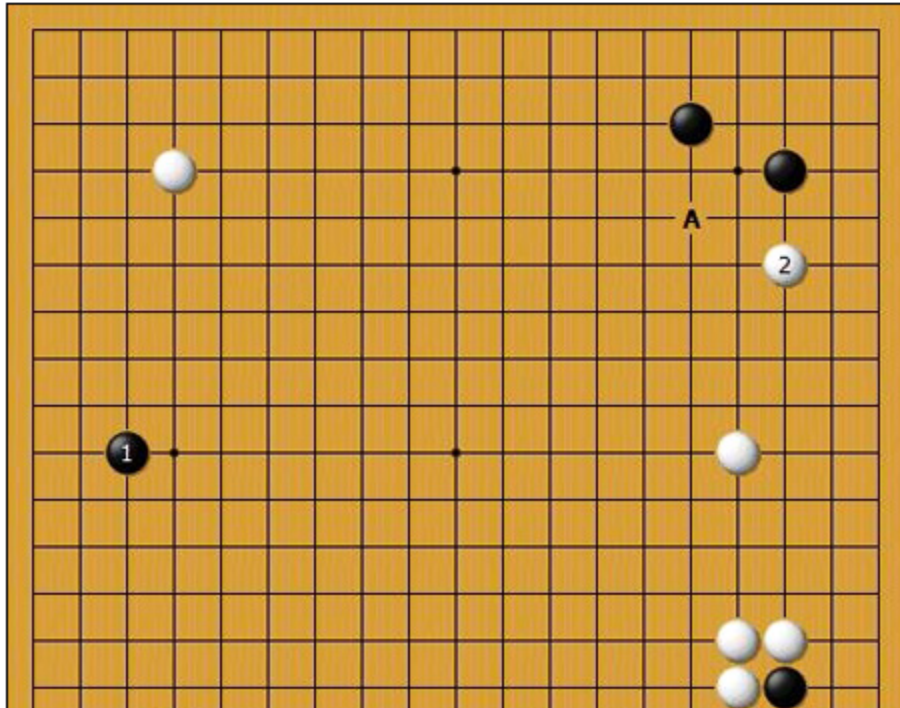


Diagram 6

It is also not easy to say that the result in Diagram 5 is bad for Black, but Black cannot stay content with it. If Black divides the left side with 1 instead, it is good for White to extend with 2. This is another advantage of White's solid connection with 1 and high extension with 3 in Diagram 5. After this, White can expand the right side with A.

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Lesson 128: Opening Evolution (4)

By Nam Chi-hyung

All the moves in an opening have specific meaning, but some of them are more important than others. Perhaps we can say that these moves express the principle of the opening. The underlying principles of already-existing openings often serve as hints for generating new openings. The relationship between the Chinese Opening and the Mini Chinese Opening shows how the former served as an inspiration to the latter.

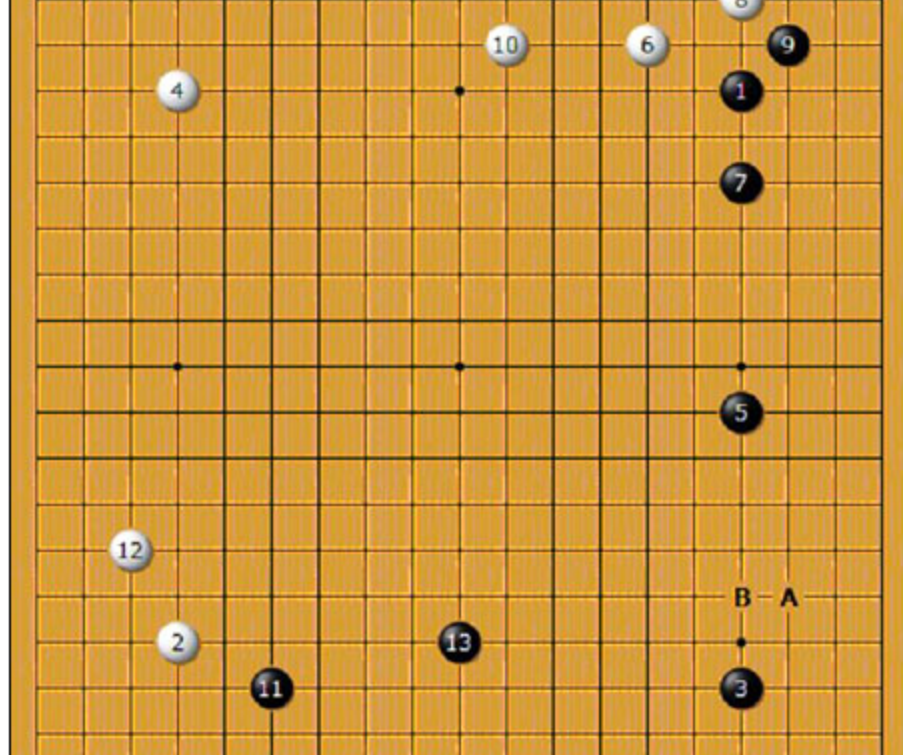


Diagram 1 Black 1 to 5 is the famous Chinese Opening (high). Its main idea is to make it difficult for White to approach at A or B. Because these approaches are quite dangerous, it is more common for White to approach with 6, and develop the upper and the left sides first.

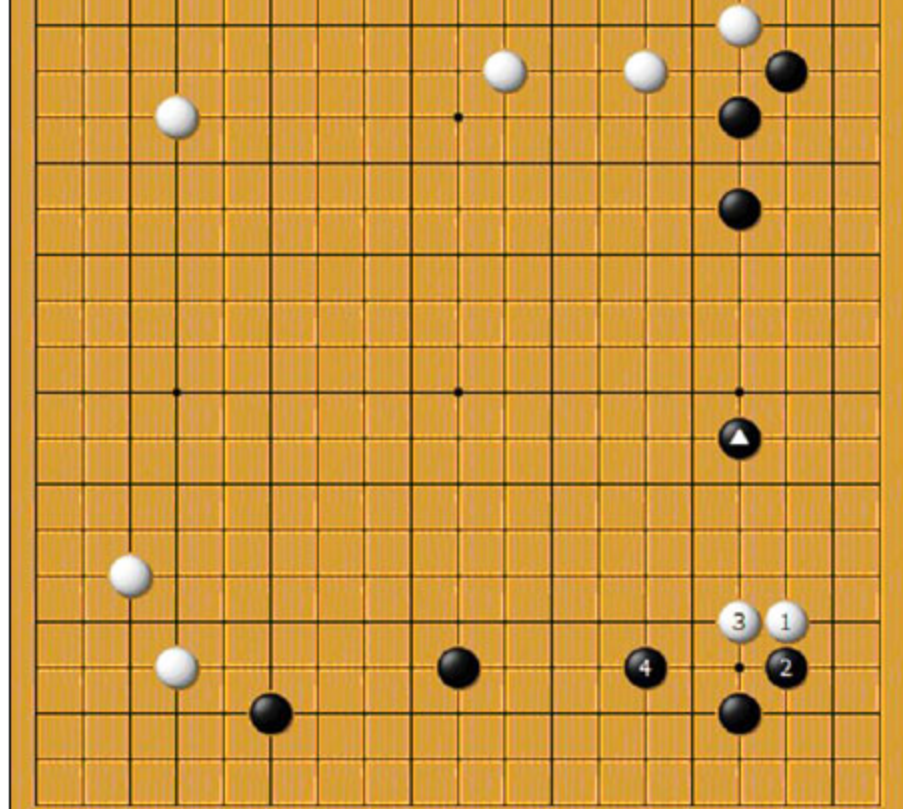


Diagram 2 However, Black's framework on the right and the lower sides is too huge to be ignored, and there is nowhere White can build a framework as big as Black's with a single move. Even though approaching toward the lower right corner has the risk of attack, it would be too late if White loses the chance to approach now. The question is how to approach, and White 1 here is the wrong answer. Because of the position of the ja-marked black stone, the two white stones will be severely attacked.

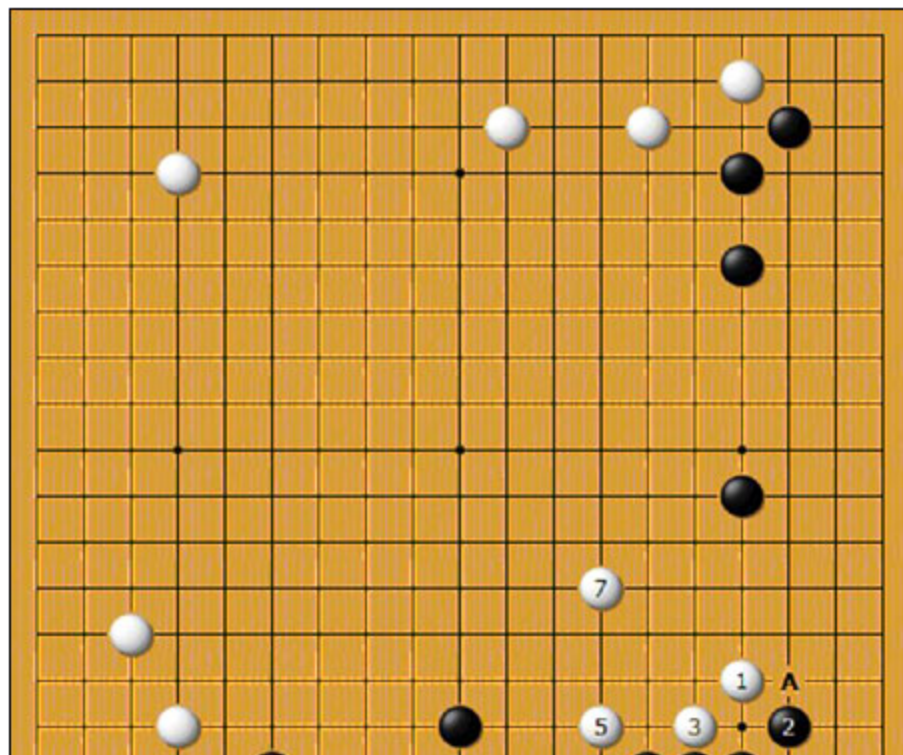


Diagram 3 It is correct for White to approach high in this situation. Black 2 was the most often played move in the old days, seducing White to answer with A. If White blocks with A, the situation will become the same as in Dia.2. However, White can become much more flexible by ignoring the right side and jumping out toward the center with 3 to 7.

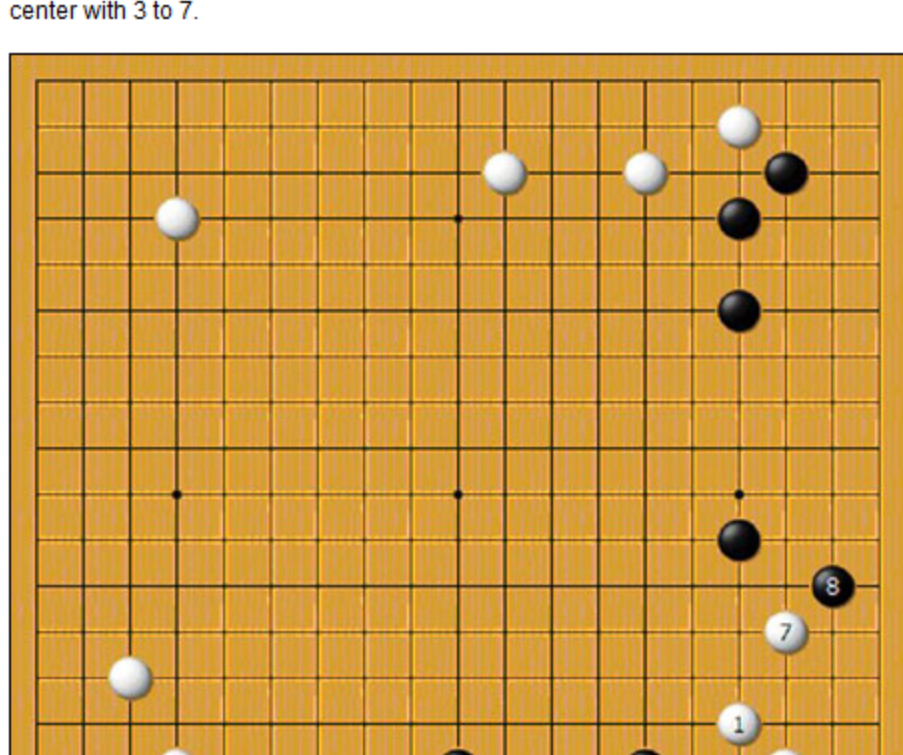


Diagram 4 Therefore, Black prefers the knight's move with 2 to the diagonal in Dia.3. Still, Black can attack the White group, and make bigger and more secure territories both on the lower and the right sides while attacking it.

As seen above, the main idea of the Chinese Opening is to force White to approach to the corner, where the surroundings are quite harsh against him. If he doesn't dare, then Black can occupy a huge framework.

The Mini Chinese Opening follows the same rationale.

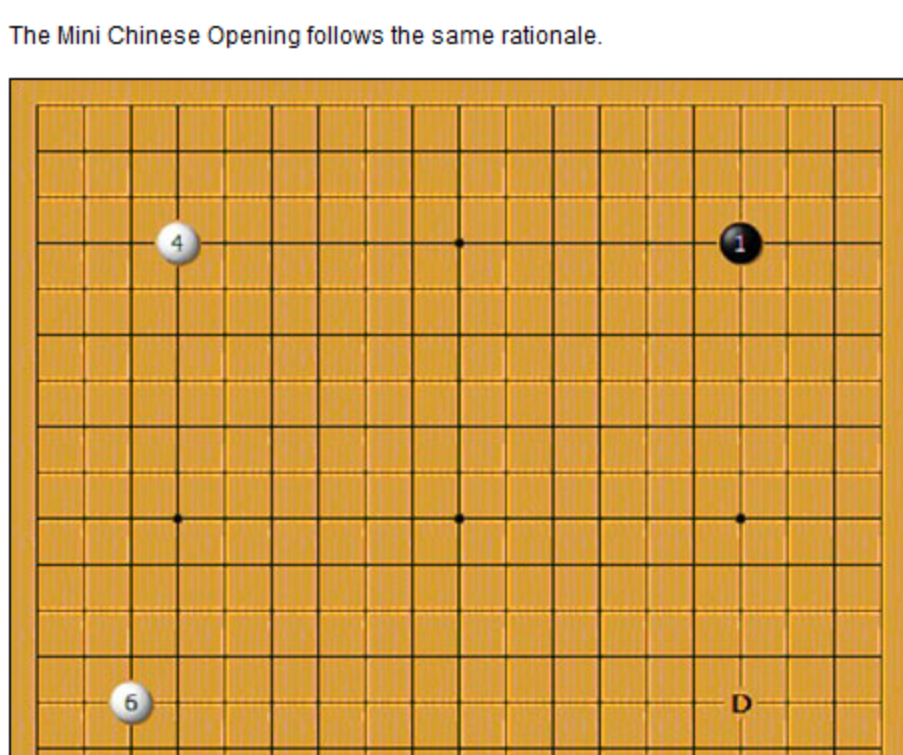


Diagram 5 Black 1 to 7 is the well-known Mini Chinese Opening formation. It is obviously bad for White to approach with either A or C. If A, Black will attack at B, and if C, Black will play D. The following results are already given in detail in the previous diagrams.

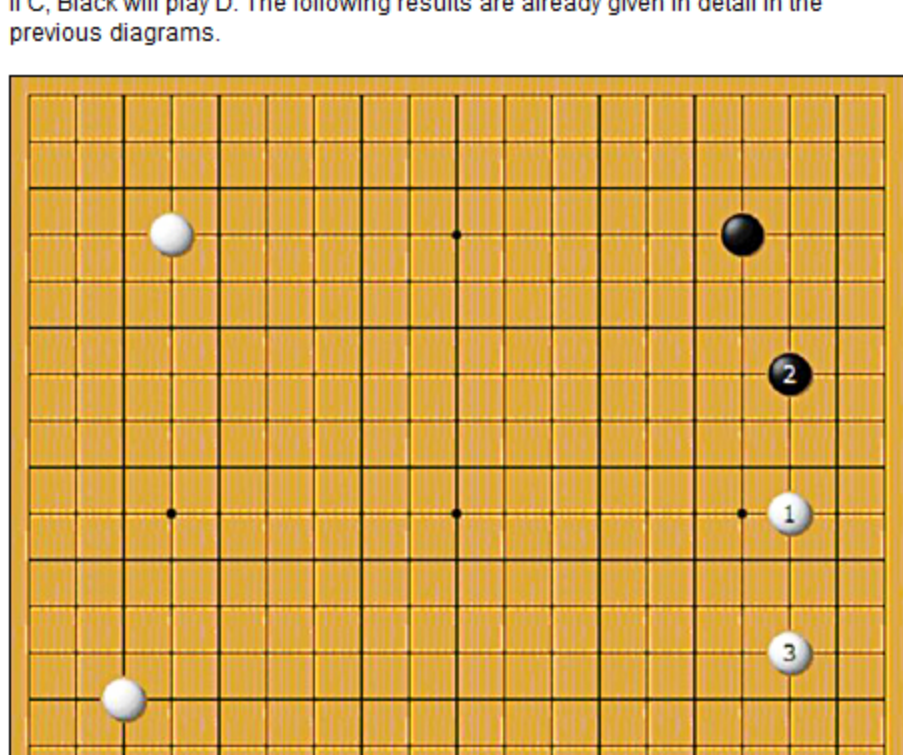


Diagram 6 As a result, White will avoid the approaches as long as he can, and White 1 here is the most frequently played move in this situation. It is correct for Black to come close from the top with 2, and White extension with 3 is also normal. The problem is Black's next move. It may look good enough for Black to enclose the lower right corner with A. Remembering the main concept of the Mini Chinese Opening, however, it would be too meek to enclose the corner where the opponent hesitates to approach himself. Then what can be the answer?

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Lesson 129: Opening Evolution (5)

By Nam Chi-hyung

As mentioned before, the main reason behind Black playing the Mini Chinese Opening is not to enclose the lower right corner himself, but to make White approach toward it. Even if it turns out that the bait failed to attract White, as already shown in the previous lesson, Black cannot take the bait himself.

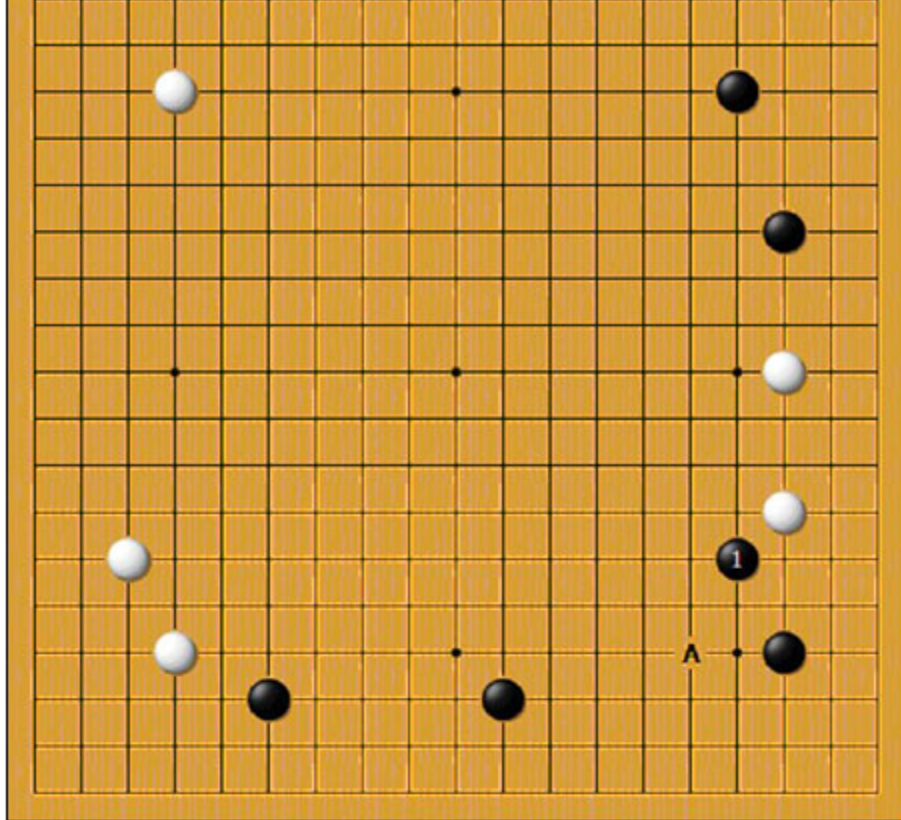


Diagram 1

Therefore, from now on, Black's main object is to make his territory in the lower right corner as big as possible without enclosing with A. Black 1 here shows this intention pretty clearly.

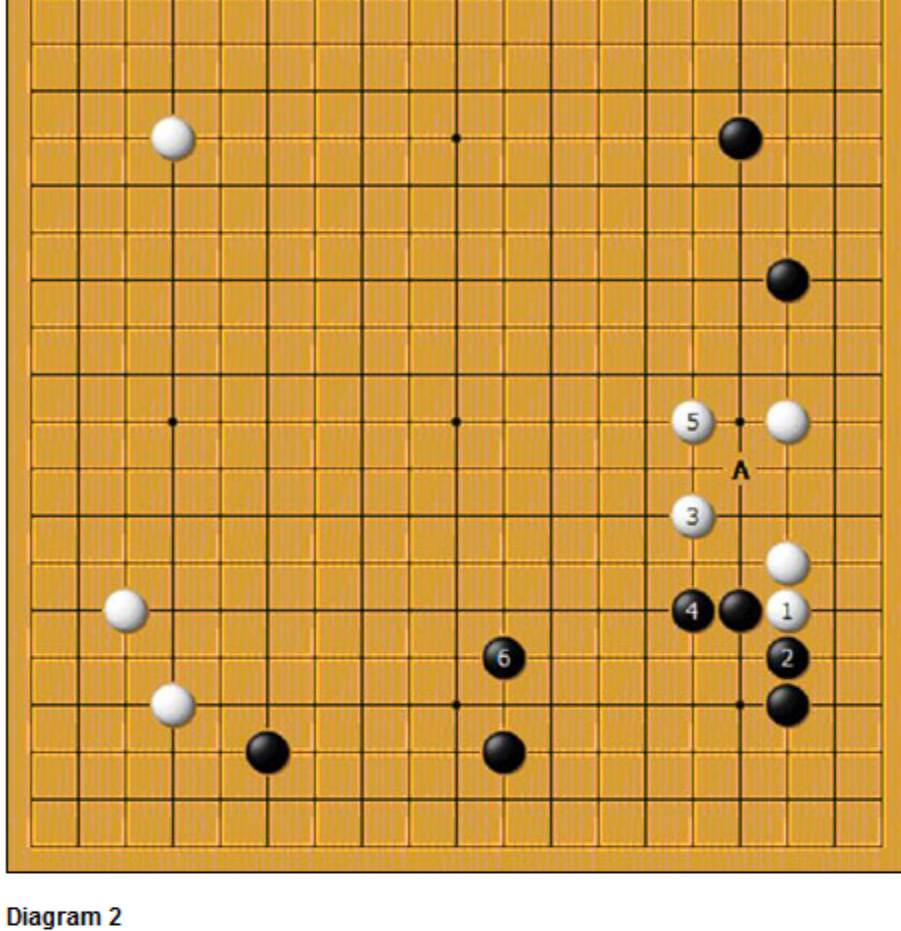


Diagram 2

In the 1990s, White 1 was the usual answer for this situation. However, because Black 4 is a good move, the resulting position up to Black 6 is unfavorable to White. White's defending move 5 is almost inevitable. If White avoids it, Black will intrude at A, which makes White unable to answer.

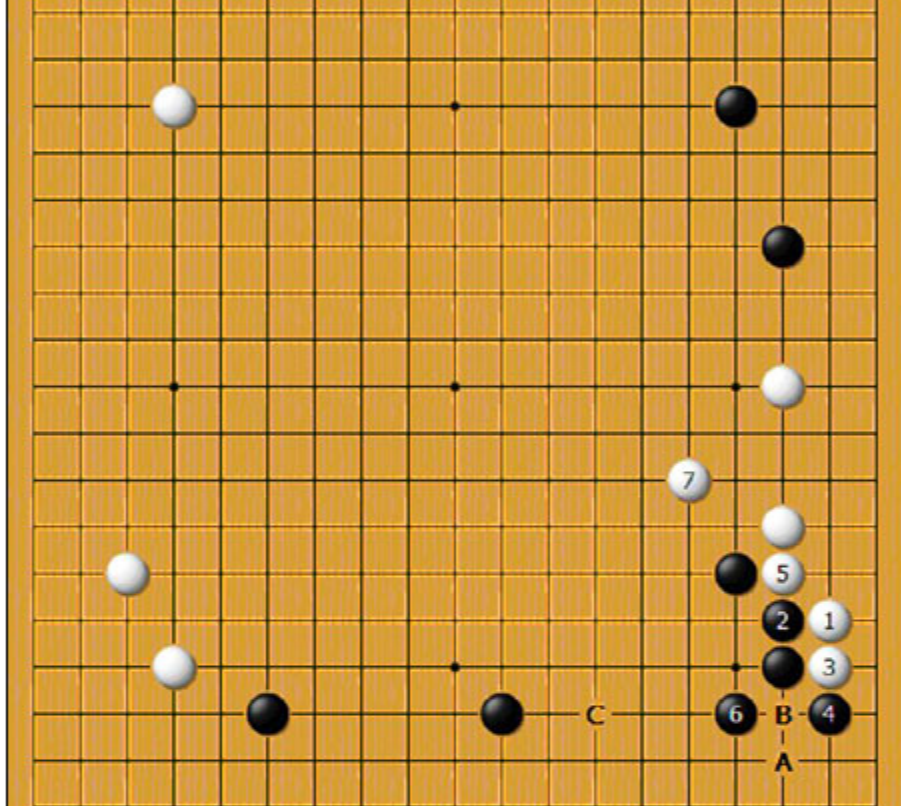


Diagram 3

White's first innovation is the low knight's move with 1, which was especially favored by Japanese professionals during the mid-90s. Because there is a potential for White to peep with A, forcing Black to connect at B, and then break in with C, the result up to 7 is not as bad as the one in Dia.2.

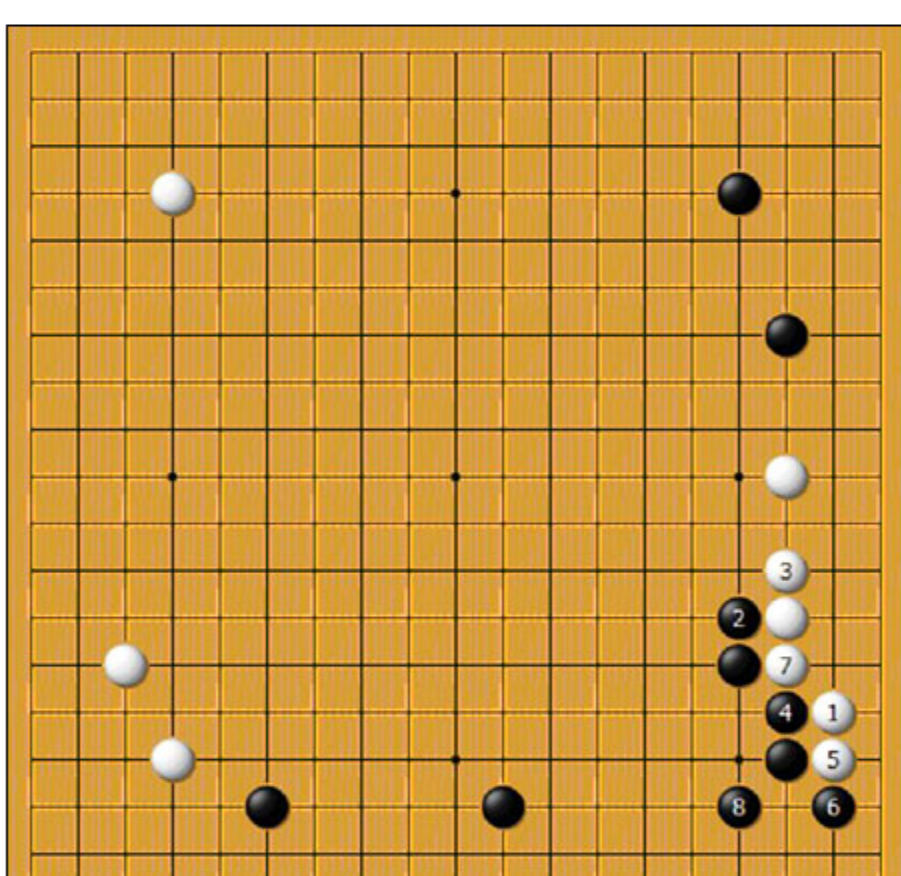


Diagram 4

Therefore, Black also tried a slight change. Before blocking from above as Black 2 in Dia.3, here Black pushes at 2. If White obediently answers with 3, Black will play the other sequence the same as in Dia.3. Owing to the exchange of Black 2 and White 3, this result where Black's influence toward the center is much bigger than before is favorable to Black.

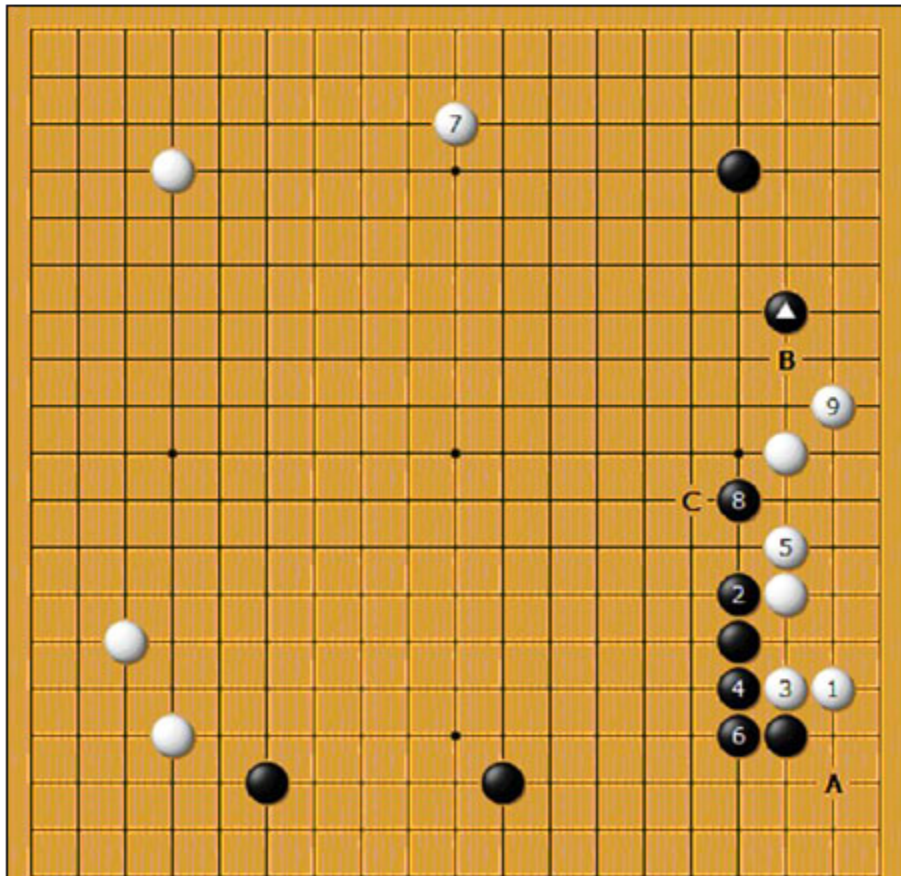


Diagram 5

To push with 3 before extending at 5 is an improvement for White when compared to the sequence in the last diagram. Although the result doesn't look very different from the others where Black has a powerful wall toward the center, it satisfies White better. Now, the lower right corner is not perfectly Black's as before because White can jump in with A, and White can also occupy the upper side with 7. One more tip; there is a variation of this sequence.

If the Δ -marked black stone is located at B, it's better for White to jump at C instead of expanding the upper side with 7. You may feel that this is a loss for White since he cannot get the upper side, but the center is as important as the side in this situation. Furthermore, Black's position in the upper right corner becomes weaker than before, as the distance between the corner and the stone at B is farther.

As you've seen through five lessons so far, the moves that organize an opening continue to change and improve according to the shift in the theories and logic, and the players' opinions and attitudes. I cannot this emphasize enough; in Baduk, no one sequence can be memorized blindly, nor can any move be played automatically.

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Lesson 130: Popular Openings (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

During one of my classes, my students and I compared baduk to other board games such as chess, backgammon, checkers, etc. For your information, most of the students were strong baduk players at high dan levels. One student stated his opinion that the opening of baduk was easier than that of other games. The reason was that there were innumerable choices of moves and formations that a player can freely choose from, and there was no need to memorize opening sequences in order not to lose quickly.



This view immediately gave rise to a lot of opposition. Other students said the freedom of choice actually made the opening of baduk more difficult, and because there were so many things you have to consider in the opening it's almost impossible to count on memory.

The difficulty of the opening stage is not the issue of this lesson, of course. Both standpoints have their own truths. I think the difference in opinion is caused by the degree of how serious the players are about their game. At least for professional players, there is no end to the study about the opening. A single innovation in an opening can make a significant difference in the whole game. As a result, many famous players labor constantly to think up new moves and create new opening formations.

We've looked at some of the representative innovations in famous openings, and the problems that the players are faced with. Now you are armed with the proper perspective about what to think about and how during the opening. However, creativity and innovation are not given by nature but obtained through hard work, namely learning and practicing the existing skills and techniques, and sometimes even memorizing and copying them. So, for several lessons from now on, I'm going to introduce more practical details of popular openings.

Let's start with the Kobayashi Opening, which started to be frequently played from the 1980s, and is still popular among players of all levels.

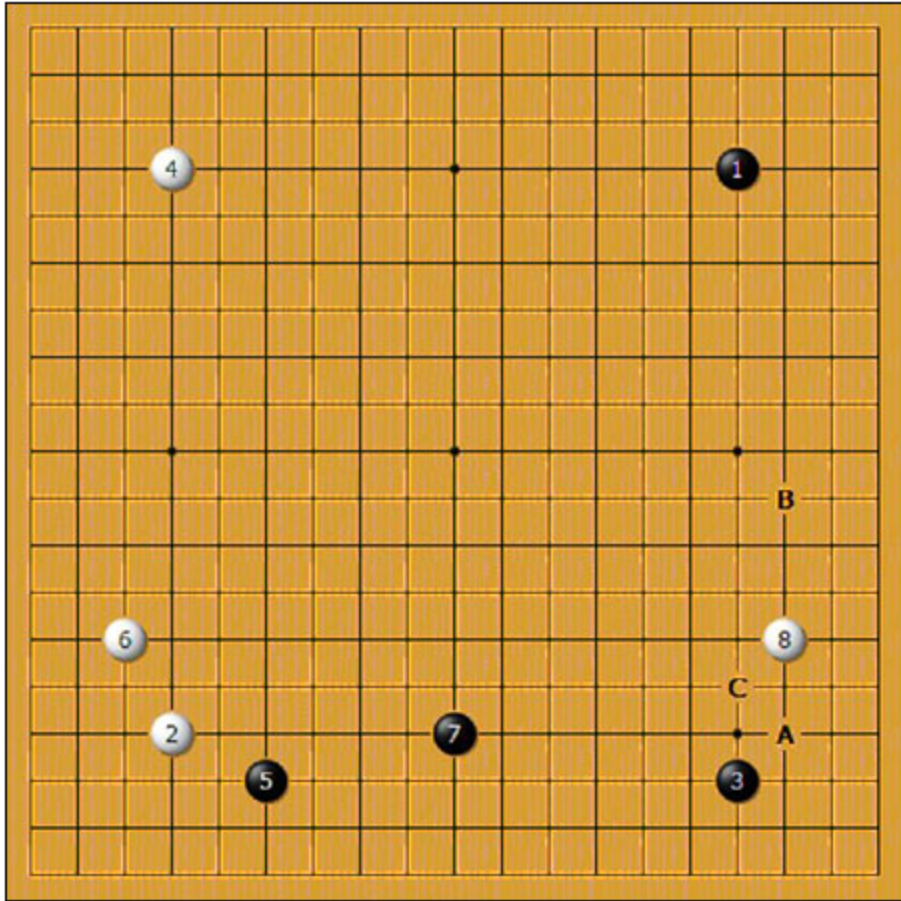


Diagram 1

All the variations starting with Black 1 to 7 are categorized as the Kobayashi Opening. However, there are hundreds of variations to this sequence, and we've already studied one of them where Black encloses the corner with A and lets White expand with B. The variation you're going to learn here begins with Black's playing C instead of A.

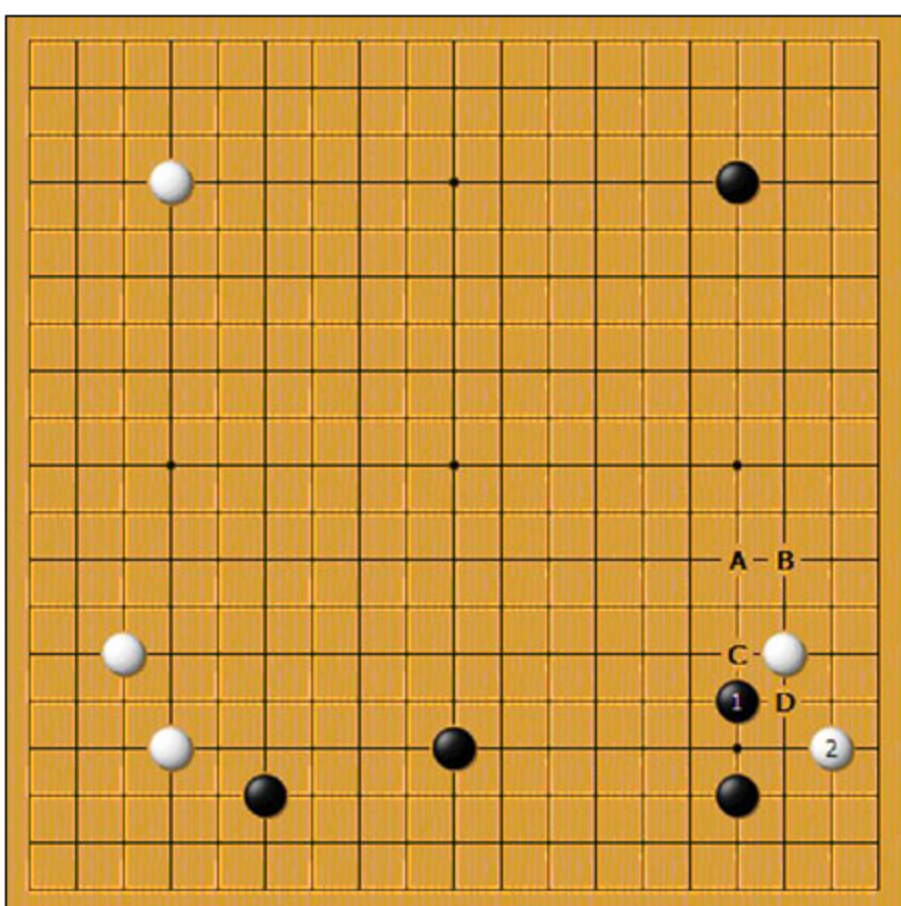


Diagram 2

Compared to the diagonal of Diagram 1, Black 1 here is more aggressive in not allowing White to make an easy living. White 2 was the most commonly played move until the end of the 20th century, and is still often played. Black's answer to this is usually A or B, and we're going to see the lower pincer first. If White pushes with C instead of the knight's move with 2, Black will block at D, which turns the corner into a huge territory for Black.

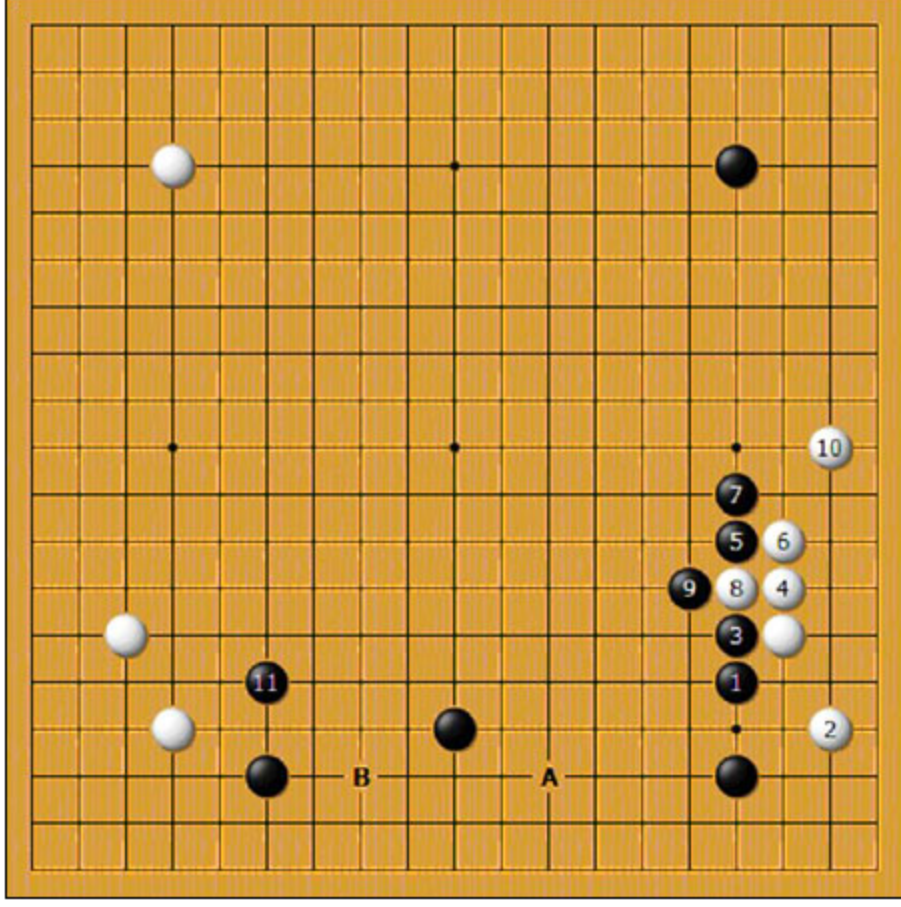


Diagram 3

Before the pincers from the side were known, Black usually pushed from above as seen here. However, even though Black's territorial framework is huge, that is only one advantage for him; besides, the framework itself is not perfect because it is not easy for Black to capture White if he comes in with A or B.

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Lesson 131: Popular Openings (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

The Kobayashi Opening has been one of the most widely played opening formations from the 1980s to the present. Due to its popularity, the innovations and transformations of this opening can dramatically illustrate the alterations and changes in the players' way of thinking over time. Seeing its continuing development will help you become sensitive to evaluating the positions on the board.

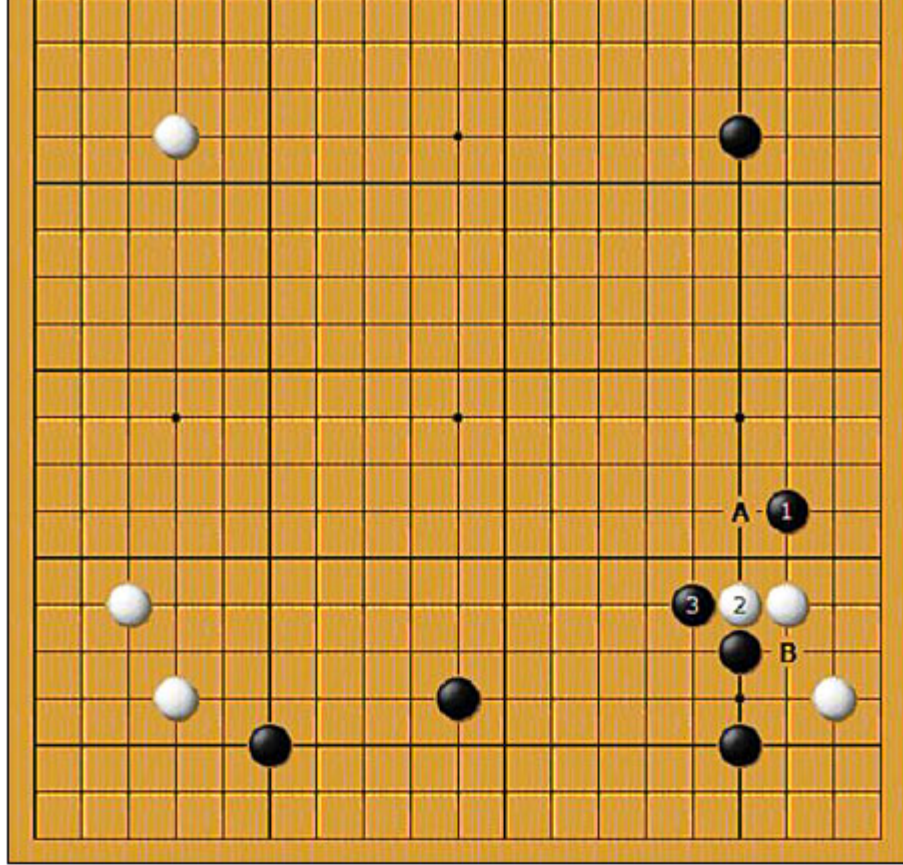


Diagram 1

Out of the two pincers, the high at A and the low at Black 1, the latter was preferred at first. When White pushes up with 2, two answers are most common for Black, B and 3. Out of those two, Black 3 was tried first.

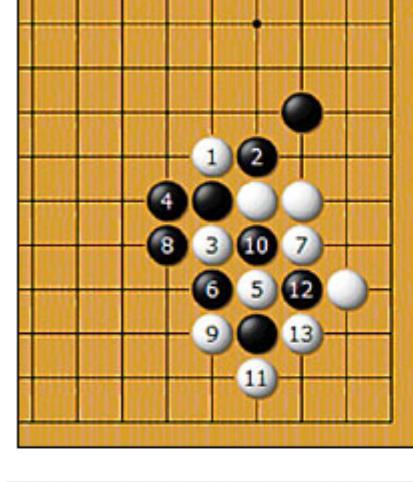


Diagram 2 (B14 is at W5)

White's bending with 1 and Black's cutting with 2 is the sequence mostly agreed upon as soon as Black bends at 3 in Diagram 1. The sequence from 3 to 14 is also inevitable.

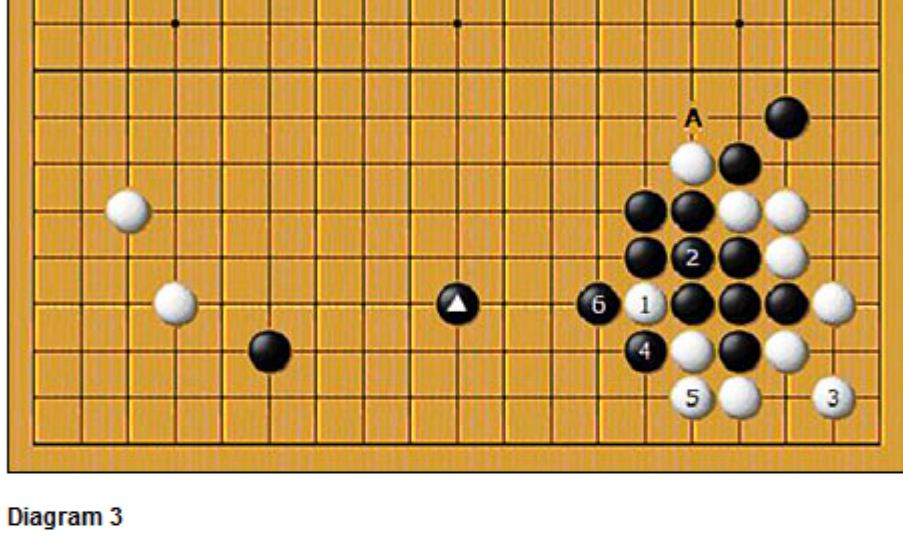


Diagram 3

Continued from Diagram 2, the resulting position up to Black 6 here is regarded as being unfavorable for Black. As you see, Black stones are forming a big bulk on the right and the $\triangle$ -marked Black stone is too close to Black's influence. Also, White can activate the stone in the center with A. For that reason, this sequence is barely played nowadays.

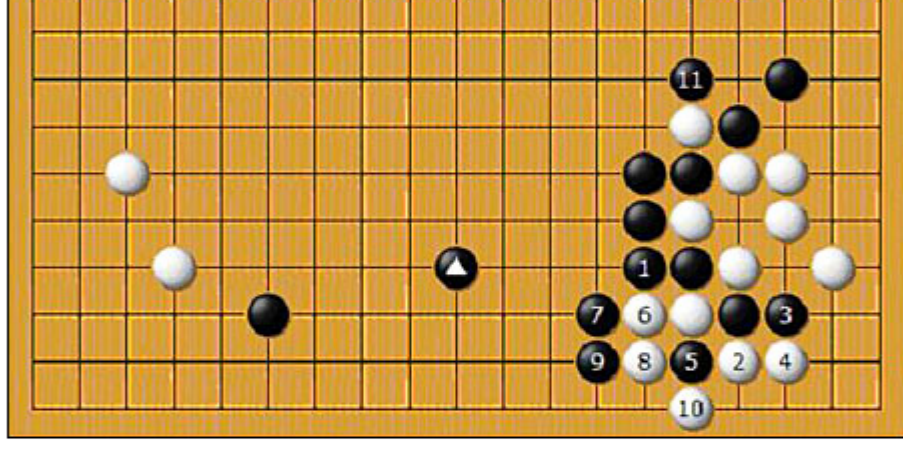


Diagram 4

If Black connects at 1 as shown here, instead of capturing one white stone as Black 10 in Diagram 2, he can get a slightly better result than the one in Dia.3. Now Black can exercise dominion over the white stone in the center with 11, and also keep the lower side more securely than before. However, the position of the $\triangle$ -marked stone is still too close to the wall, and White's territory in the corner is much bigger than before. Because of all these reasons, to bend at 3 in Diagram 1 has almost disappeared from recent games.

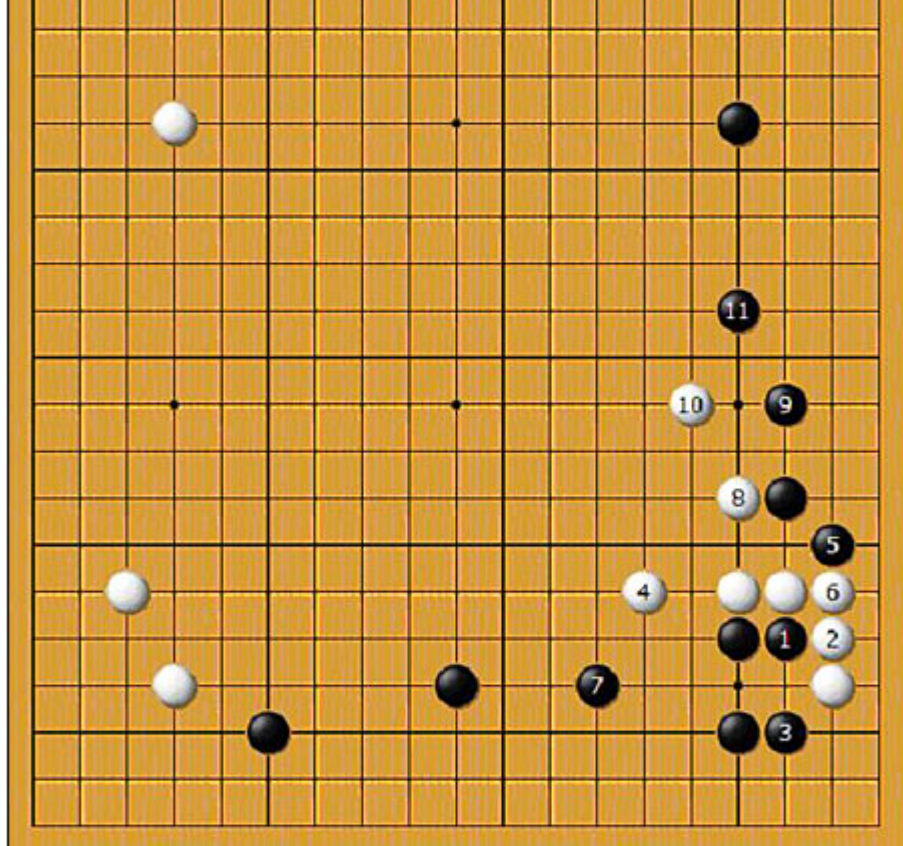


Diagram 5

After players realized that one of the two options led to undesirable results, the sequence starting from Black's push at 1 became the only available choice. Perhaps it will be to your surprise that the result of playing this branch was much more successful than expected for Black. Until White found another response, the sequence up to Black 11 was played by everybody, and most people regarded it as a joseki. However, sensitive players, although they were unable to put their reasons into words, favored Black.

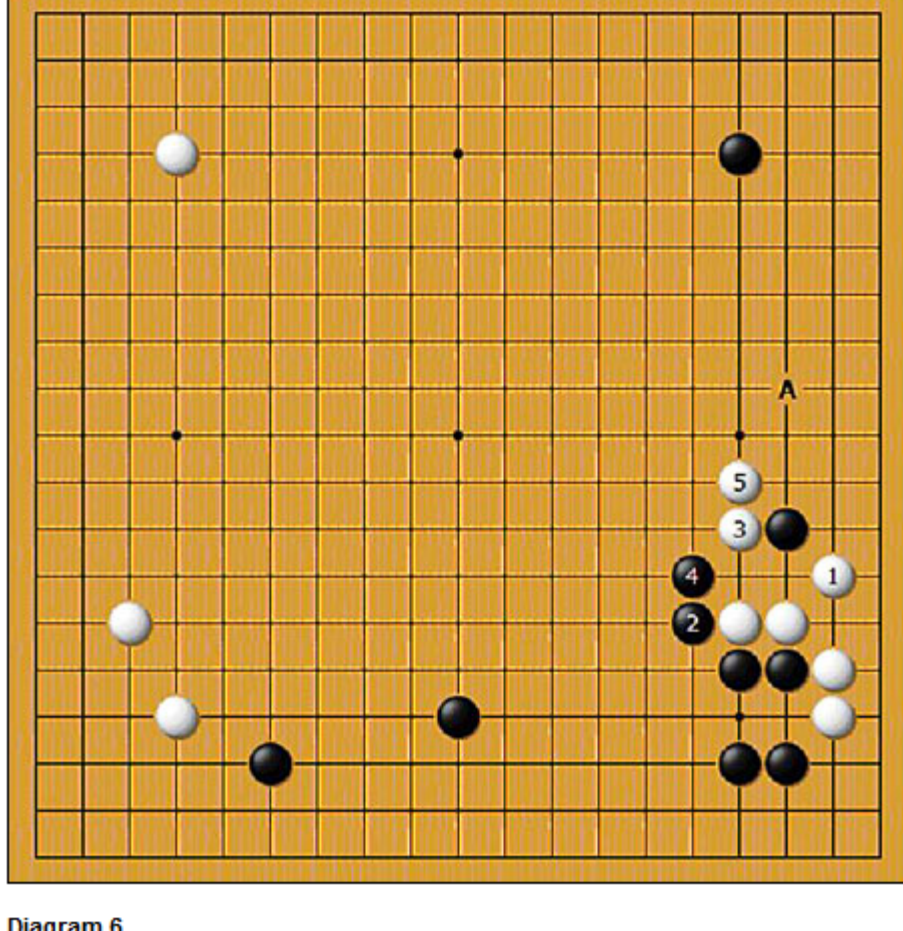


Diagram 6

To make a tiger's mouth with 1, instead of jumping at 4 as in Diagram 5, is an innovation. Although there are still debates about who has the more advantageous result, because Black's approaching at A is pretty painful for White, at least here White can prevent Black from having both the lower and the right side as in Diagram 5. Since personally I'd like to take Black in this situation, I hope players find out a better option for White than this. Thus, this opening is still in the process of developing.

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Lesson 132: Popular Openings (3)

By Nam Chi-hyung

We've studied the Kobayashi Opening with Black's low pincer. The variations derived from the high pincer will not be difficult to understand, since you already know what to consider when you evaluate the final position of a sequence of moves.

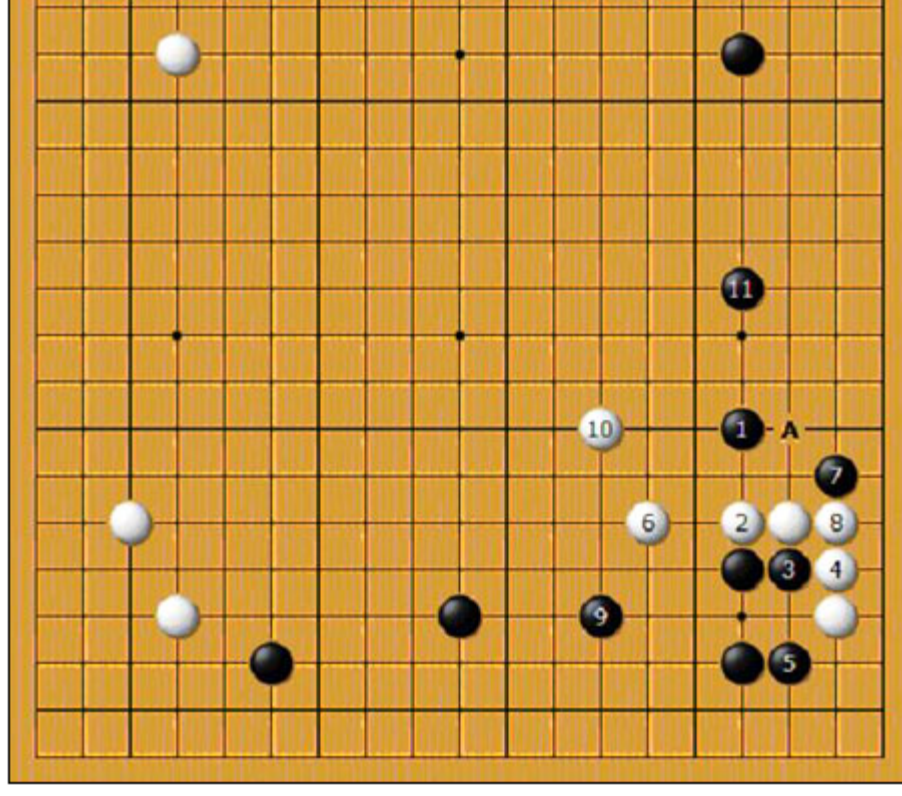


Diagram 1

Here, Black plays the high pincer with 1, rather than the low one at A. But that's the only substantial change in the sequence up to 11, and the resulting situation is still quite favorable to Black, as he gets both the right and the lower sides. Obviously, this is what Black wants.

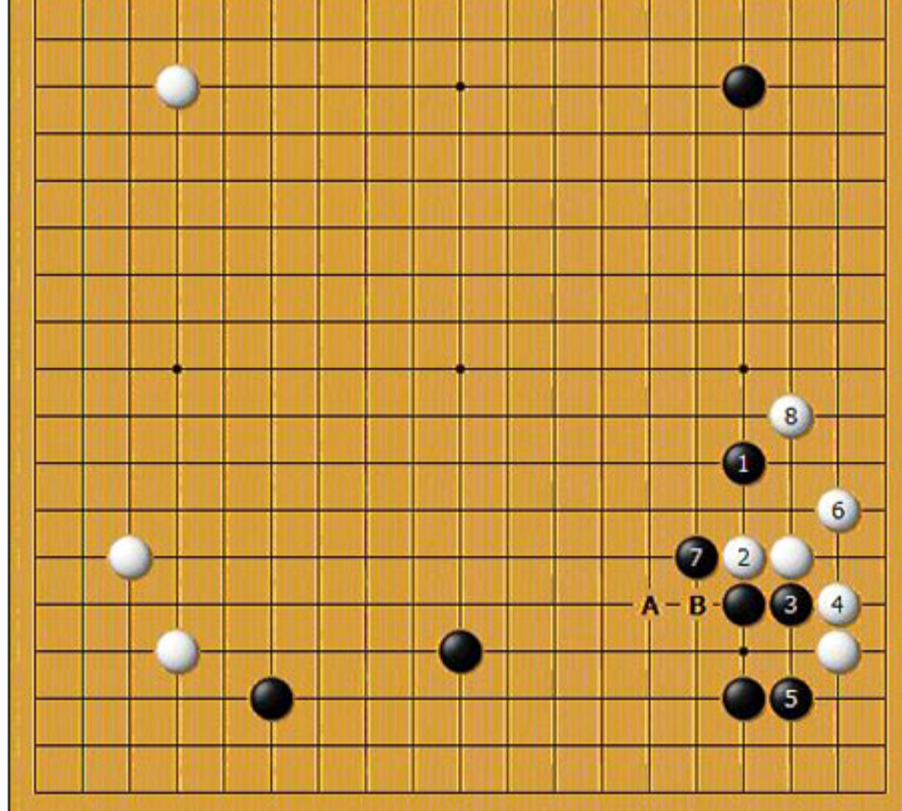


Diagram 2

However, the same as his reaction against Black's low pincer, White can play the brilliant tiger's mouth with 6 instead of jumping toward the center with A. Owing to this move, White is not only able to gain territory along the right side, but also to provoke Black's territorial framework on the lower side by threatening Black's weakness at B.

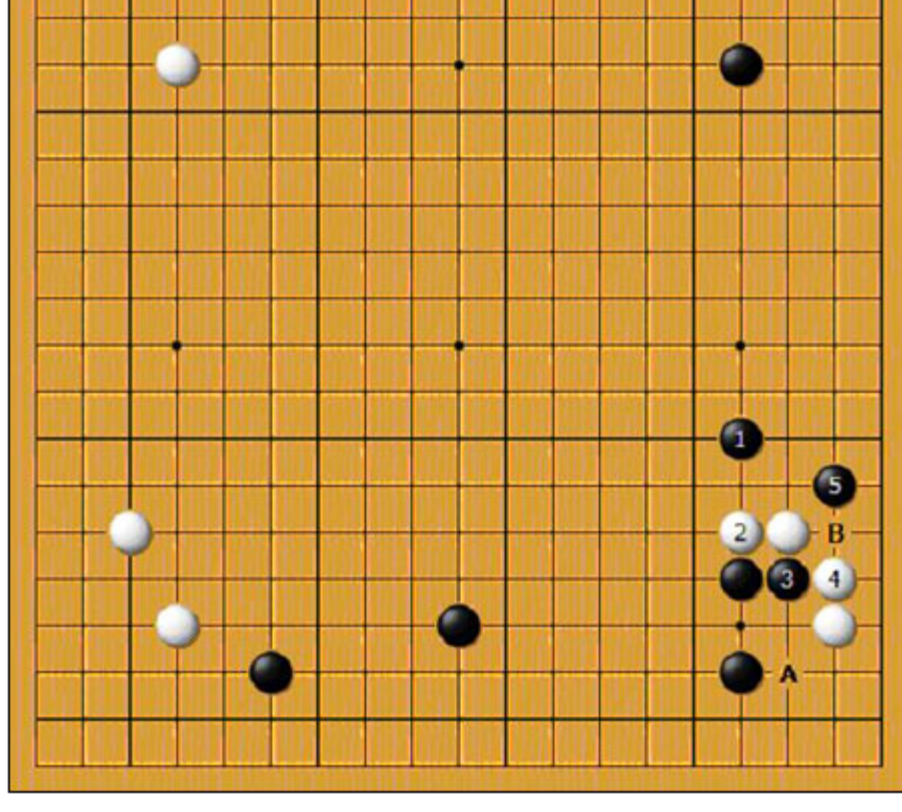


Diagram 3

As you've seen so far, whether with the low pincer or with the high, it is impossible for Black to have a better outcome than White after White's discovery of the good tiger's mouth, which led Black to make a change in the sequence, namely Black 5. The intention behind Black's peeping with 5 in advance of playing A is very apparent. If White answers with B, Black will return to the favorable sequence of Dia. 1 by playing A without giving White a chance to play the good tiger's mouth. This sounds very promising, but White is not as stupid as Black expects.

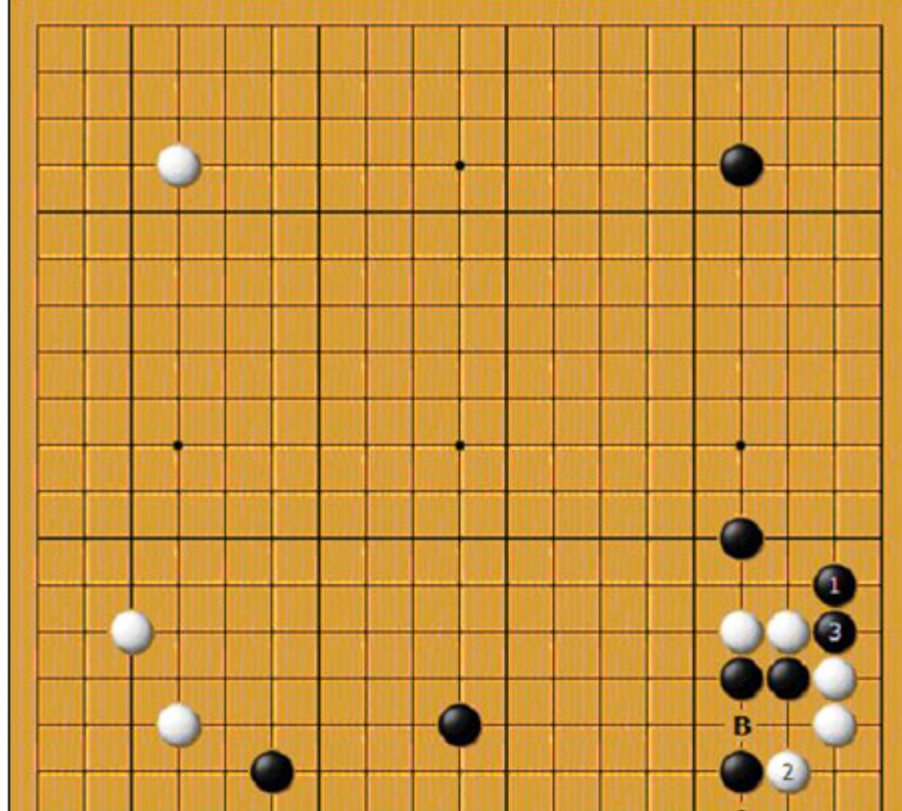


Diagram 4

Instead of connecting at 3, White attaches at 2, asking for Black's answer. Whether he plays A or B, answering White 2 is clearly bad for Black because White gets the corner territory as a bonus, when compared to the final position of Dia. 1. Consequently, to cut at 3 is the only option for Black after he chooses to play 1.

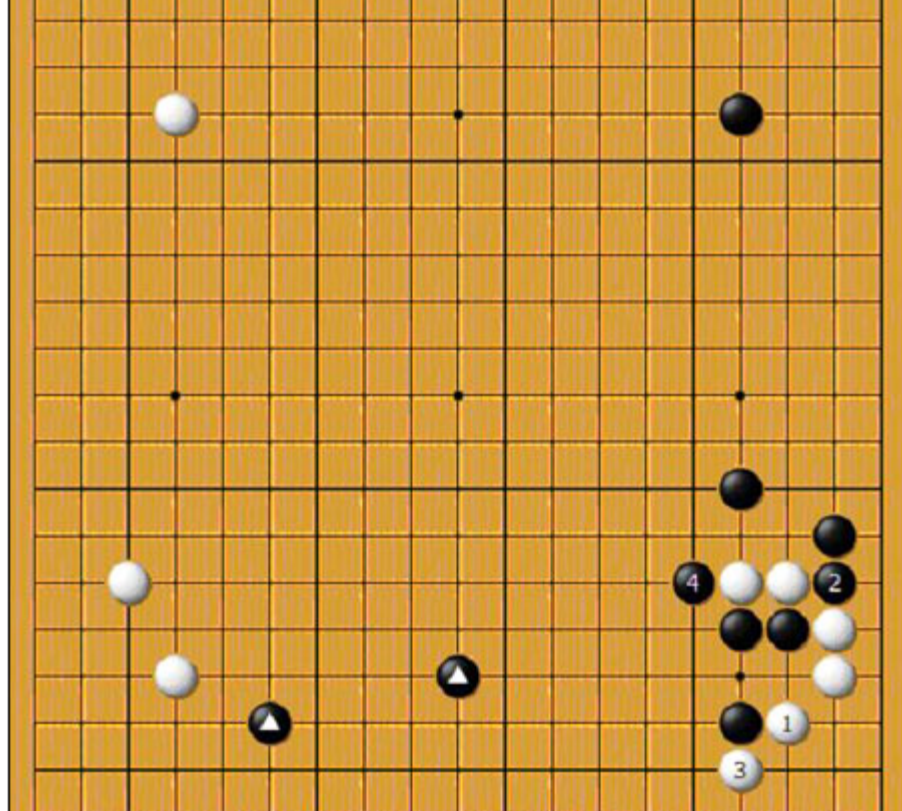


Diagram 5

What troubles Black is that the attempt to get the better outcome by changing the order of moves is foiled, not by a brilliant move, but by a simple one like White 3 here. As you see, the two $\triangle$ -marked black stones are much less useful than before.

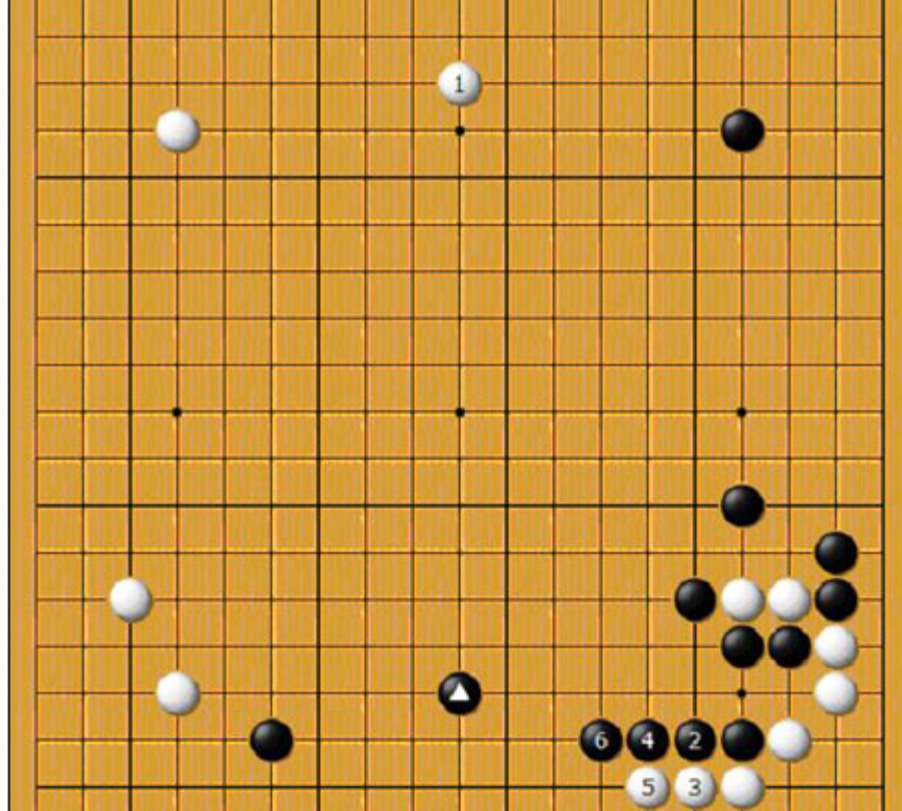


Diagram 6

In addition, White doesn't need to spend any more moves on the lower side to prevent Black from making territory there. It is just redundant for Black to play 2 to 6, and the $\triangle$ -marked stone is still useless.

I'm afraid that you may get the feeling that the Kobayashi Opening is not as powerful as before, since Black's results weren't better than White. One thing for sure is that we should not expect more from Baduk. If your opponent answers correctly, the best you can get is a balanced result. Or, perhaps there can be another innovation for Black. This is what the young Korean professionals are working on these days.

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Lesson 133: Popular Openings (4)

By Nam Chi-hyung

We've been through the famous Kobayashi Opening, and its variations and innovations in the three previous lessons. The one we are going to study in this lesson is as popular as the Kobayashi Opening, especially among amateur players, and has many variations as well. Unfortunately, however, it has no special title, so that I will call it PO-2 (Popular Opening 2) here.

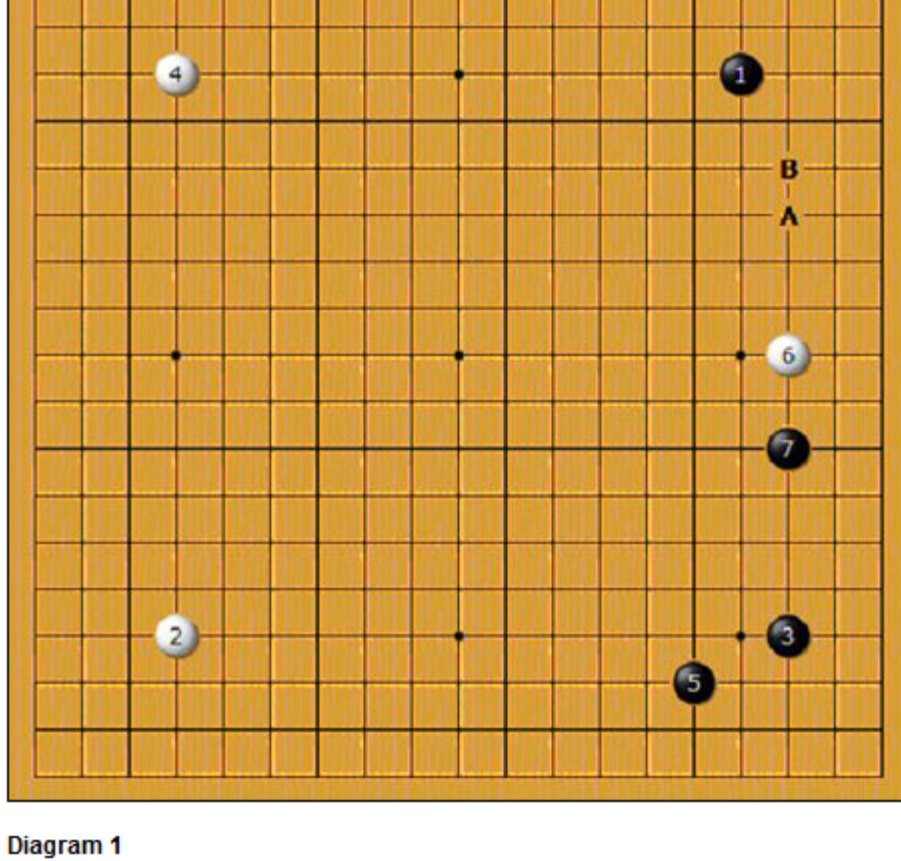


Diagram 1

The basic layout of PO-2 is composed of Black 1 to 7. With this, Black can develop the lower right corner and can also have the initiative on the right side, which helps him to plan ahead for the other parts of the board. What will follow is wholly dependent on whether White expands/approaches with A or B.

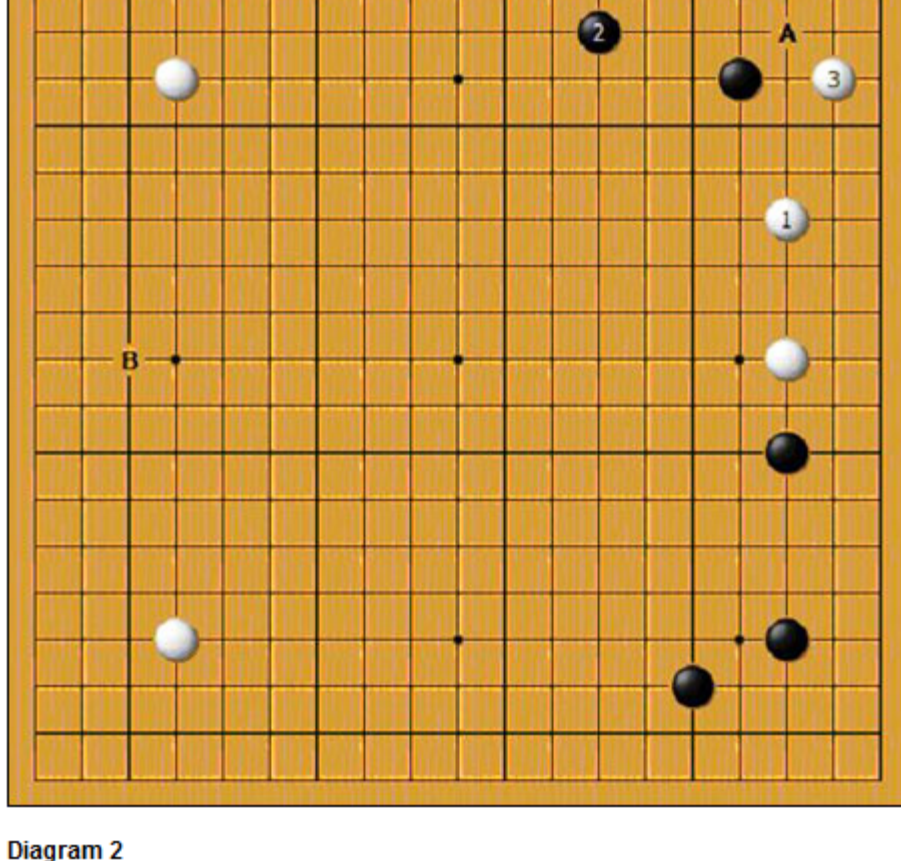


Diagram 2

Until the 1980s, when the pace of the opening was not as rapid as the present, and when players preferred less aggressive moves than now, White approached with 1, and Black answered with a large knight's move. You may also be able to feel the peaceful and harmonious atmosphere of that time. After White 3, Black plays either A or B according to his mood.

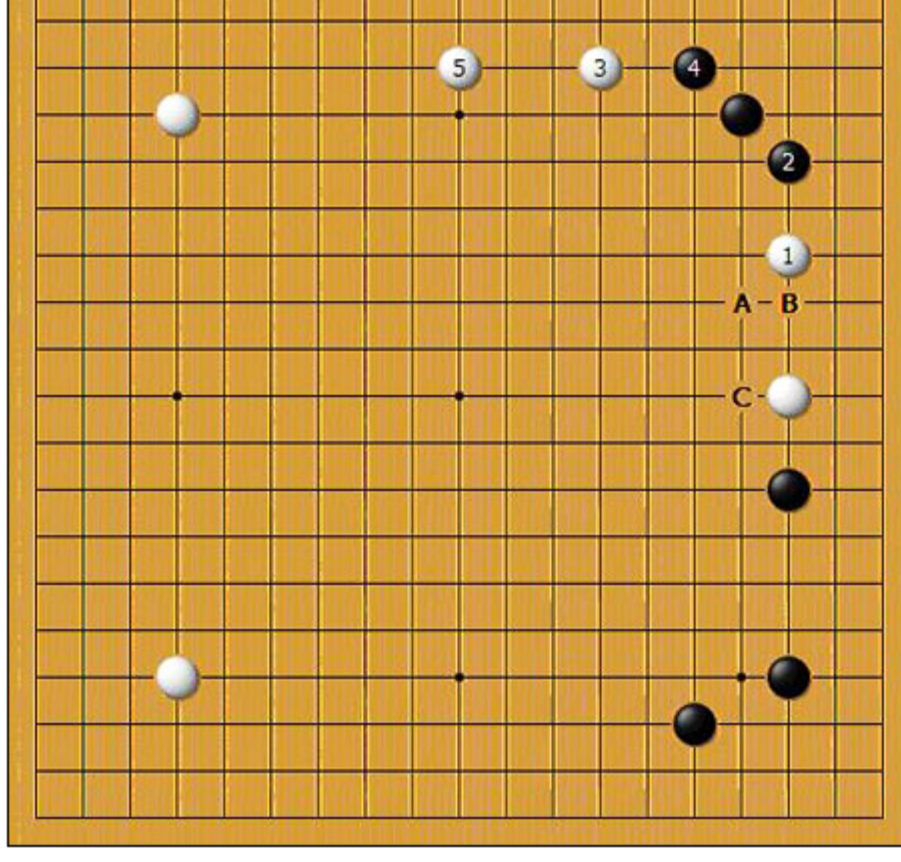


Diagram 3

However, the modern way of playing is much more dynamic. Nowadays, against White 1, Black squeezes White with 2 rather than occupying the upper side as in Dia.2. Even though White can have some territorial framework on the upper side, it's more entertaining for Black to be able to harass White by pressing from above with Black A, White B and Black C.

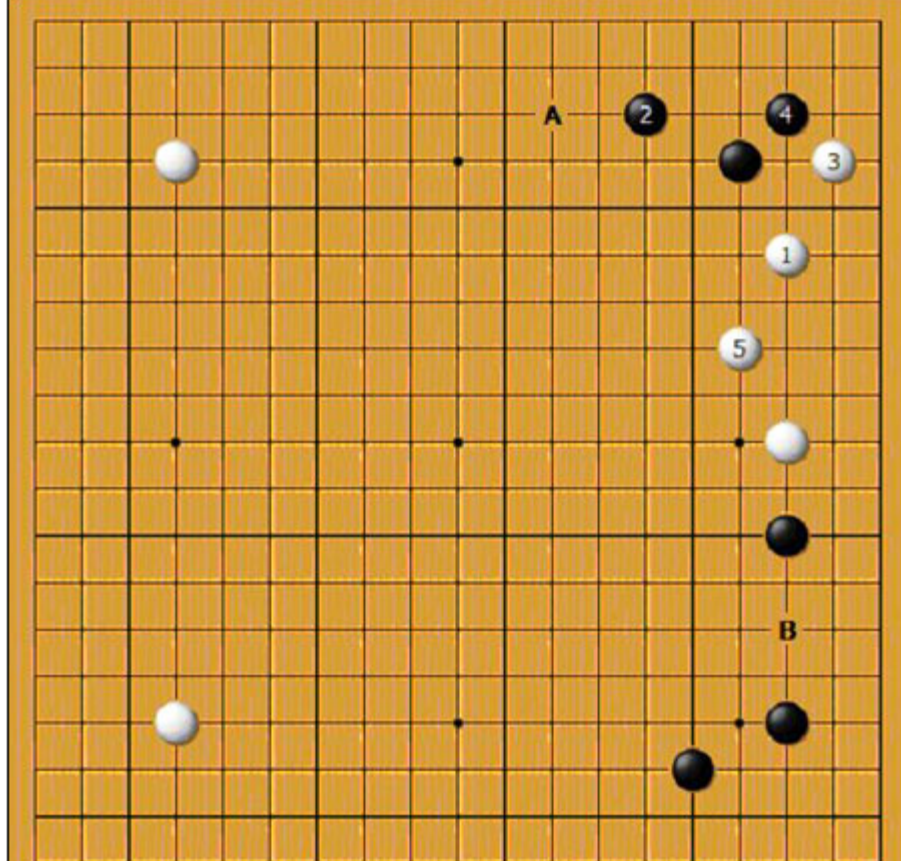


Diagram 4

Scared of Black's aggressive reply, White chooses a tighter approach with 1. Playing 1, White wants Black to answer with a nonviolent knight's move with 2. Then, White will settle his group on the right side with 3 and 5. Since White doesn't need to worry about the safety of his group, he can aim to squeeze the black group in the upper right corner with A, or to intrude into Black's territory with B.

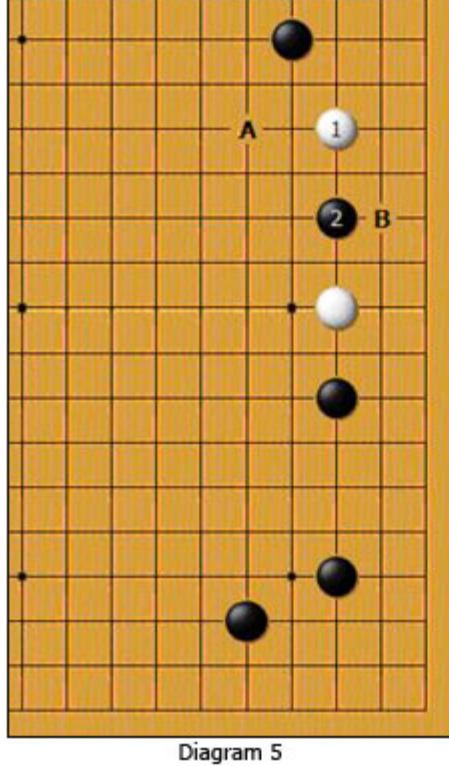


Diagram 5

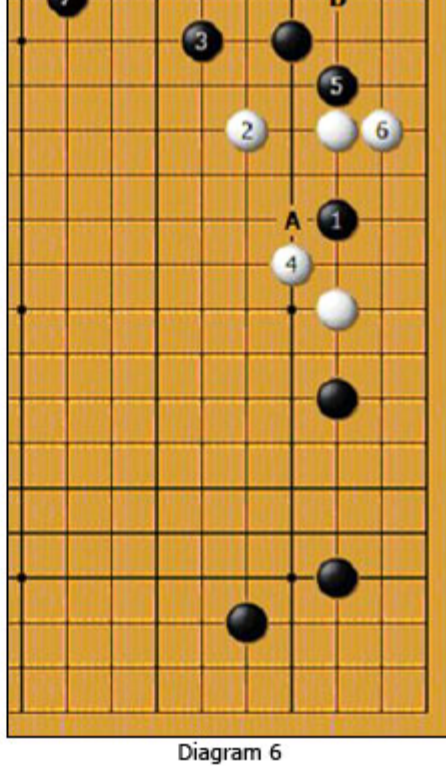


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

Black's jumping into the middle of the two white stones is an endeavor to avoid the outcome of Dia.4. Against it, the commonest White's answers are A and B.

Diagram 6

White 2 to Black 7 is one of the most frequently played sequences. Later, Black can move Black 1 with A while White can invade the corner with B.

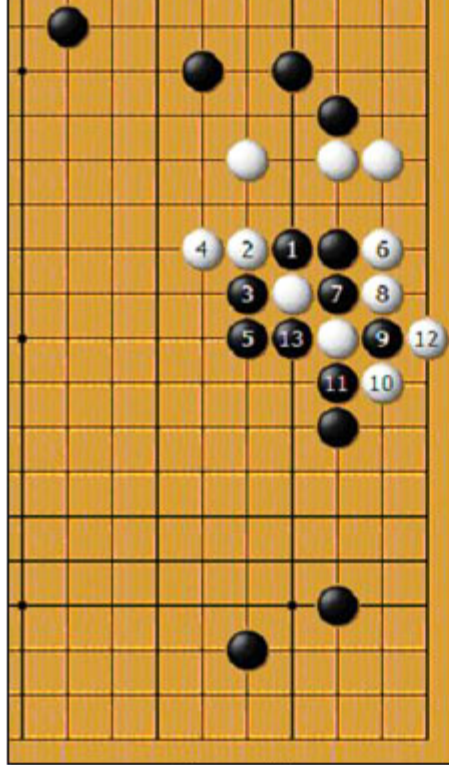


Diagram 7

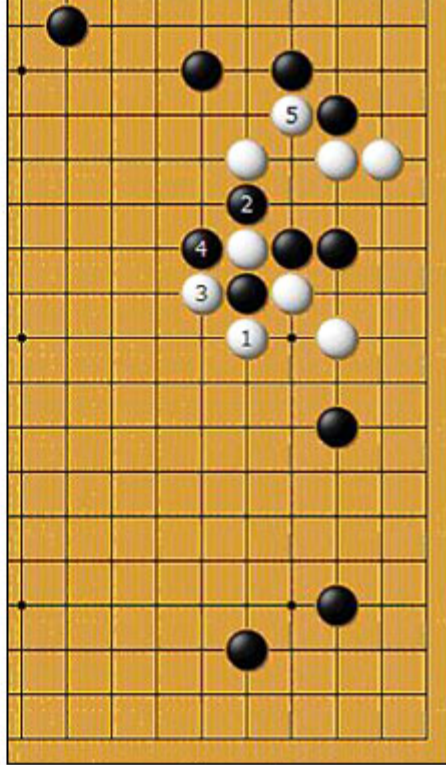


Diagram 8

Diagram 7

Let's see what Black can do by pushing up with 1. Against Black's cutting at 3, White's extension with 4 is the usual answer. As you see, Black's influence on the right side is quite huge up to Black 13.

Diagram 8

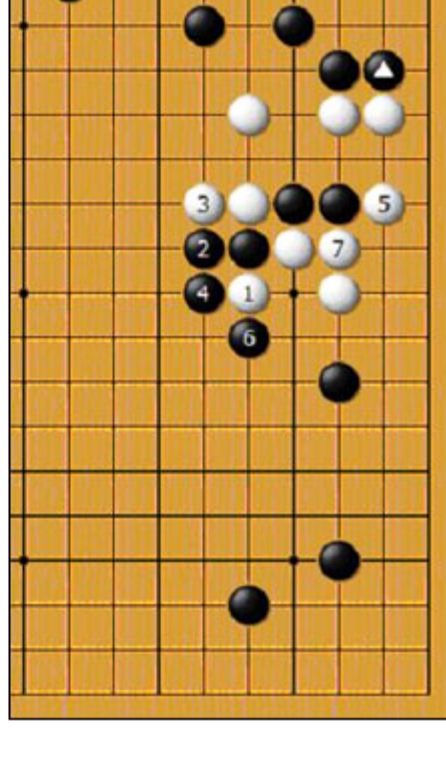
If White plays at 1 here instead of White 4 in Dia.7, a severe ko fight is expected as shown.

Diagram 9

If there is the $\triangle$ -marked black stone in the corner, it will also be possible for Black to come out with 2. Up to 7, again Black can build a powerful influence on the right side.

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Lesson 134: Popular Openings (5)

By Nam Chi-hyung

We've seen some of the older variations of PO-2. Of course they are still valid, but a player should never stop innovating.

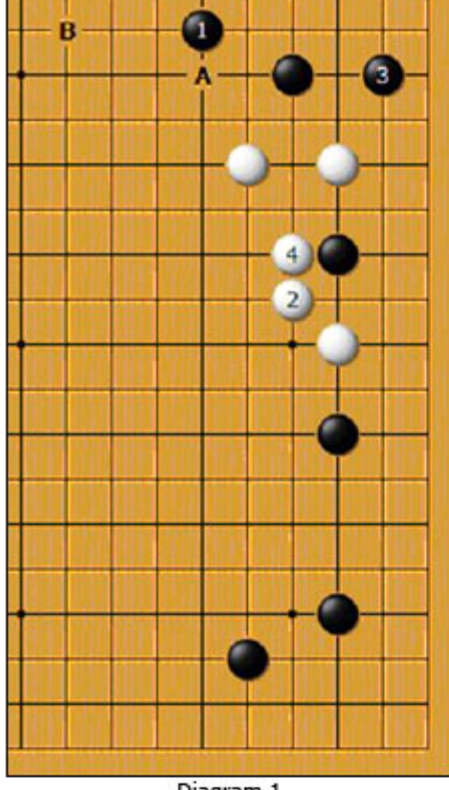


Diagram 1

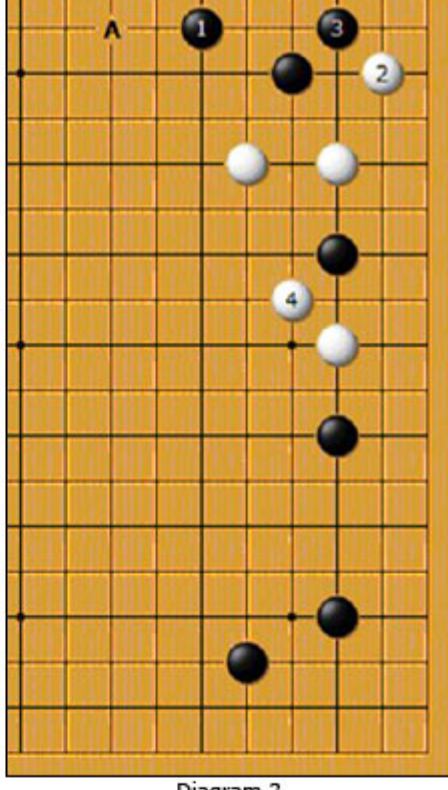


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

In the last lesson, Black answered with the one-space jump at A, which required him one more move at B to secure the territory on the upper side. What if Black plays the knight's move at 1 here? If White plays 4, the same as before, then, with 3, Black can keep the corner in sente by forcing White to answer. As you may guess, this result is quite satisfactory for Black.

Diagram 2

Since White doesn't like the result of Diag. 1, it is natural for him to change. As you see, he tries to prevent Black from playing 3 in Diag. 3 by playing 2 before securing the side with 4. If Black answers with 3, then White can come back to 4. This final situation is more favorable for White than the one in Diag. 1, because he has both the bigger territory on the side and a good move to squeeze Black with A on the upper side.

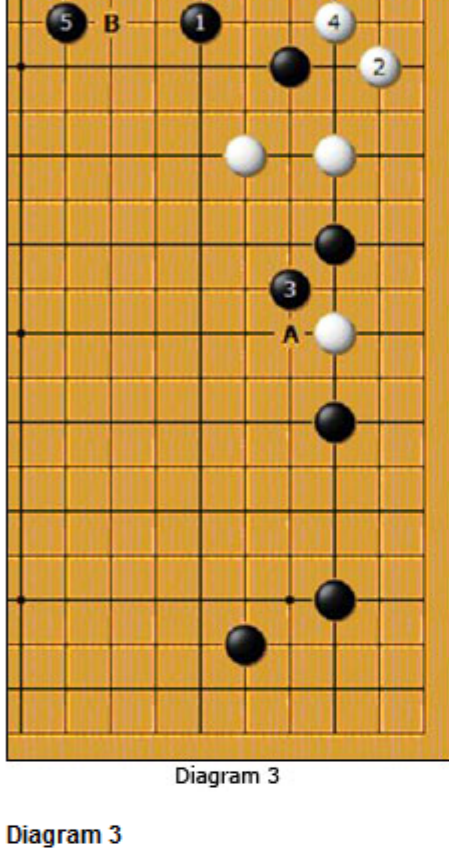


Diagram 3

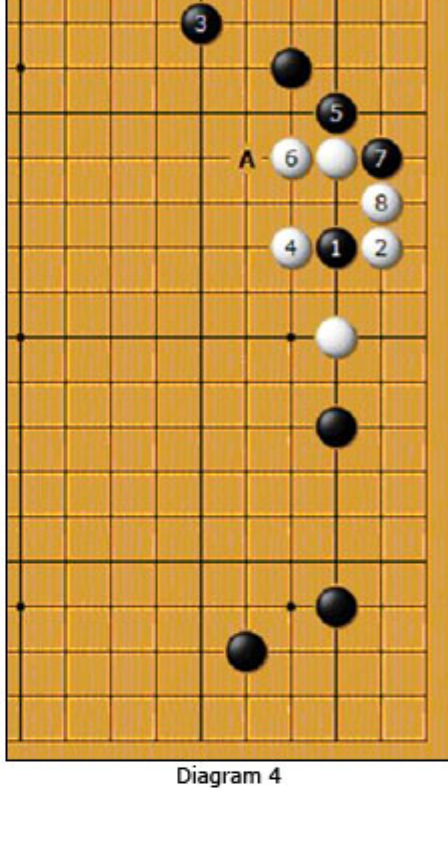


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

So now it's Black's turn, and the sequence from Black 3 to 5 is almost like a joseki. After this, White normally comes out toward the center with A, and it becomes a fight in various ways. However, all the fights are doable for both players. If Black adds one more move at A in order to avoid the fights, the black stones on the upper side will be attacked by White with B.

Diagram 4

Now, let's see the variations derived by White's attachment at 2, instead of jumping at A. The sequence shown here is a somewhat old-fashioned joseki, which is still played. As with the other older josekis, the result of this one is also peaceful and well-balanced.

Diagram 5

As mentioned before, modern players prefer more dynamic sequences. However, Black 3 here chose the wrong direction to bend. The result up to 8 is pretty bad for Black since the fact that White can play A in sente at anytime isolates the black stone in the corner.

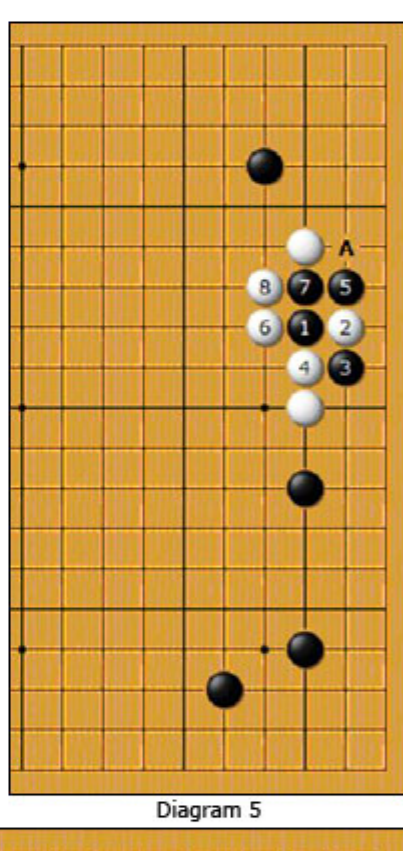


Diagram 5

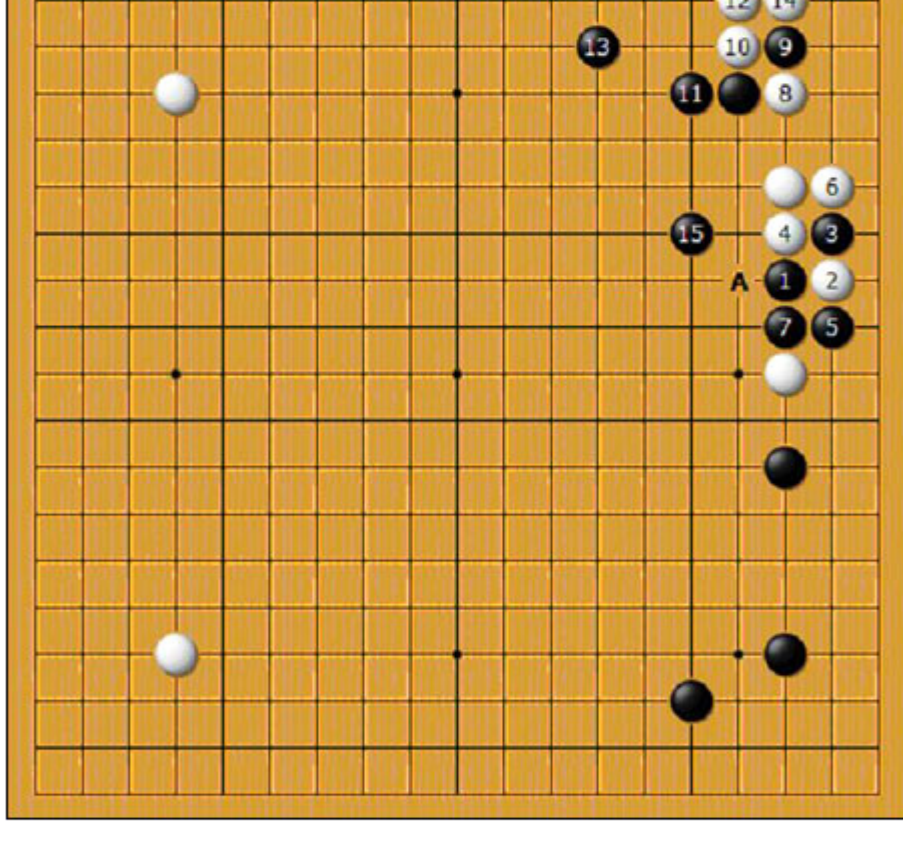


Diagram 6

Therefore, Black has to bend from 3. This time, it's not good for White to play atari with A. What White should focus on in this sequence is to make his stones strong toward the upper right corner, and White 6 is well suited for this. To play 7 instead of taking White 2 off is a good move for preventing White from bending at A, and the sequence from White 8 to Black 15 is the commonest one. Although this is one possible choice for White, the resulting situation looks a little bit better for Black.

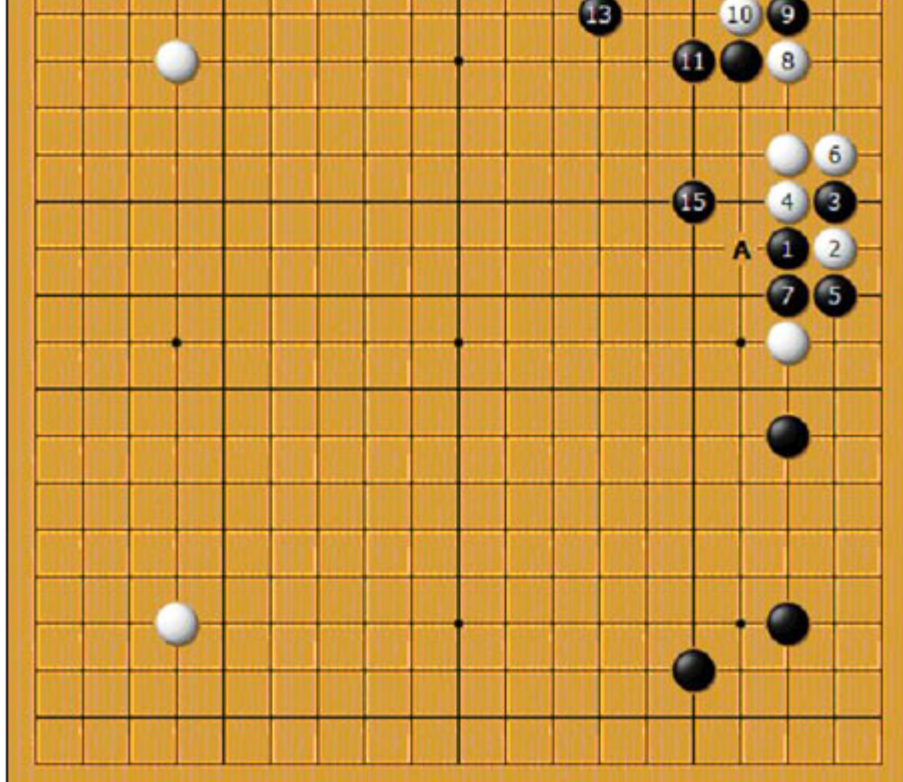


Diagram 7

To go into the 3-3 point with 1 is another option for White instead of White 8 in Dia. 6. However, the fight up to Black 20 seems not easy for White.

Hence, it is not easy for White to get a good result by attaching under the dividing black stone, and that's why White usually jumps out with A in Diag. 4.

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Lesson 135: Popular Openings (6)

By Nam Chi-hyung

One of the dominant openings of the 1980's was that of the Japanese 9-dan professional Takemiya, which was played by everybody who liked the influential style. His opening, called the "Cosmic Style," is now remembered as a direct expression insisting on the importance of the center. Takemiya's contemporaries were not wholly convinced by his play at the time, and that allowed the player who claimed the center to do whatever he wanted. Nowadays, however, everybody knows the danger of letting your opponent gain the initiative in the center area, and therefore plays more shrewdly. Because of this, a simple joseki went through a big change.



Diagram 1

Less than 20 years ago, White 2 against Black's approach at 1 was considered a bad move because it allows Black to take the corner up to 11. Players of the past thought the uncertainty of White's influence was inferior to Black's secure territory. On the contrary, players of the present appreciate the value of White's influence more than Black's territory. They think they should not give up an influence so easily to the opponent.

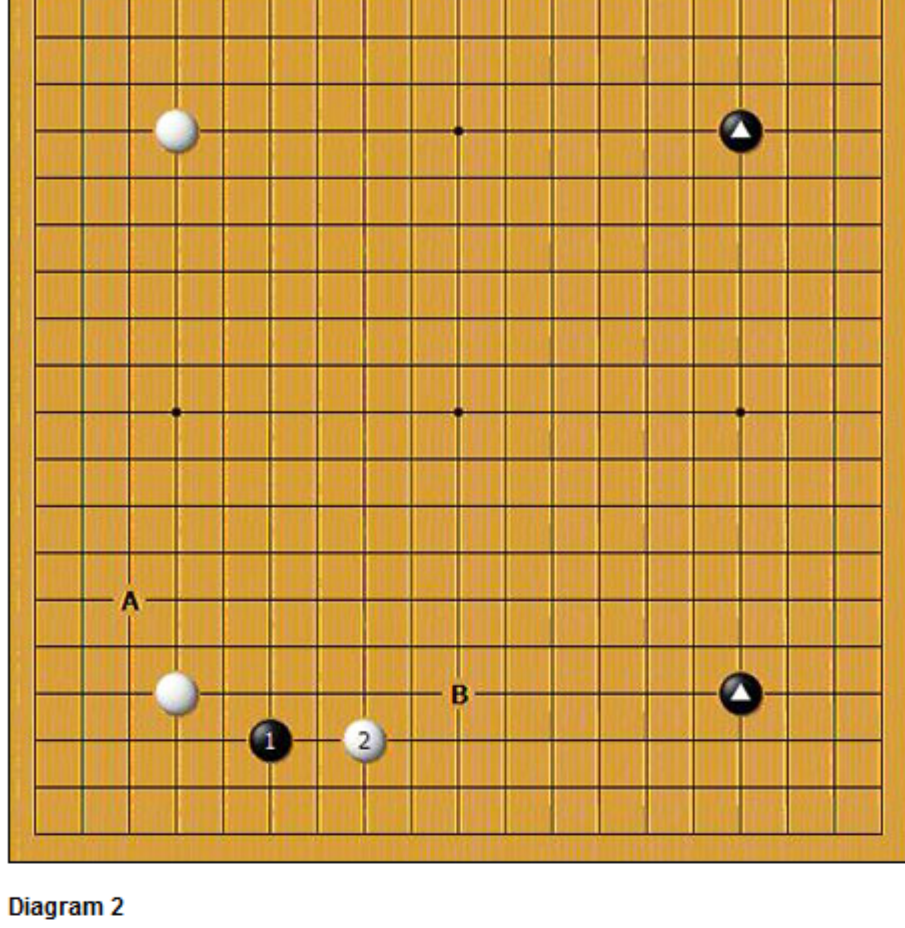
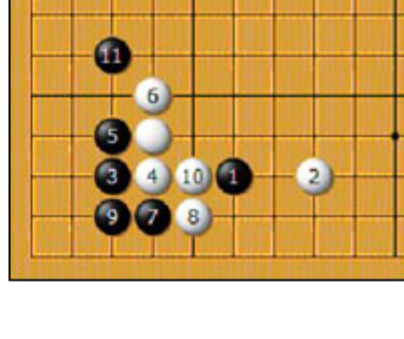


Diagram 2

The choice of the sequence in Diag. 1 would be a mistake, especially when Black intends to play an opening emphasizing the influence by playing the two star points as shown. The ideal process would be something like White's answering with A instead of 2, and Black's expansion with B.

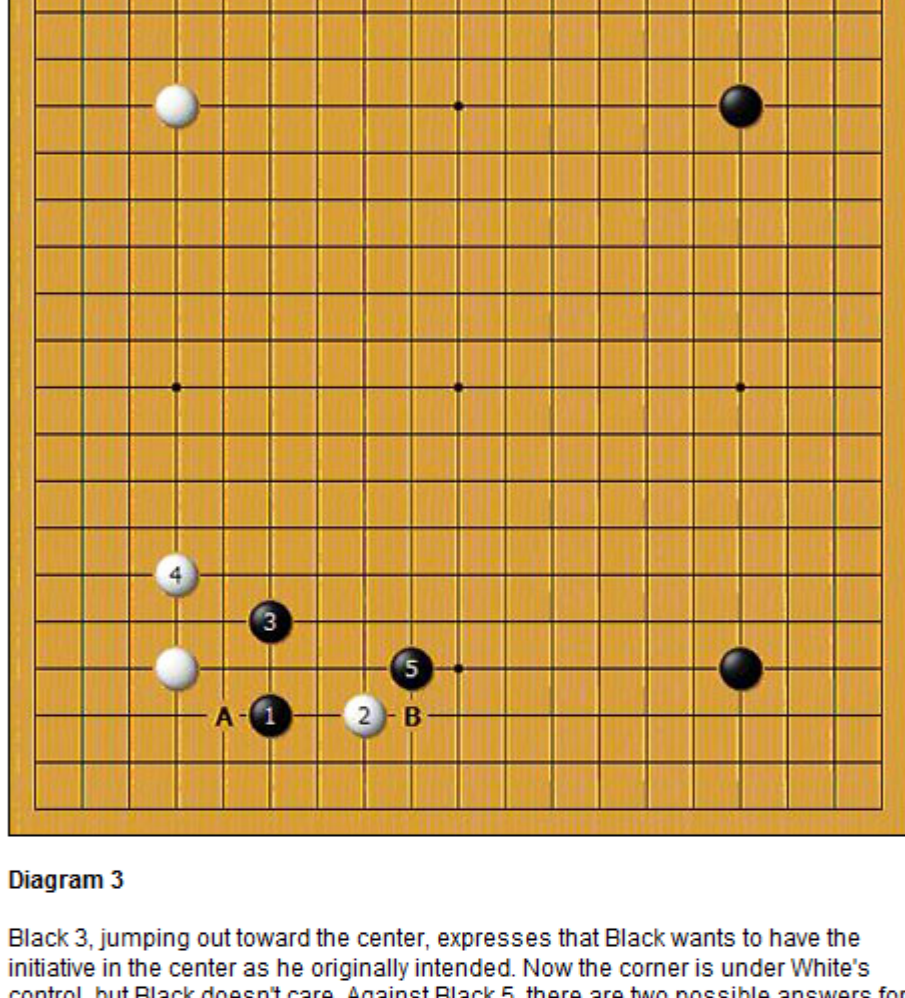


Diagram 3

Black 3, jumping out toward the center, expresses that Black wants to have the initiative in the center as he originally intended. Now the corner is under White's control, but Black doesn't care. Against Black 5, there are two possible answers for White, A and B.

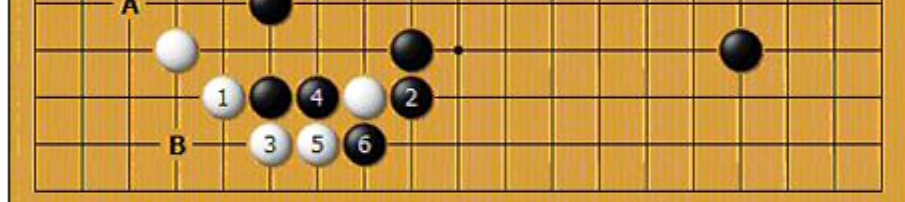


Diagram 4

If White attaches at 1, Black will block at 2. Up to 6, White gets the corner and Black gets the influence on the lower side, which is quite well-balanced. Don't be frightened by the size of White's corner territory, since there are weak points such as A and B in this shape and the whole area cannot be considered territory as it is.

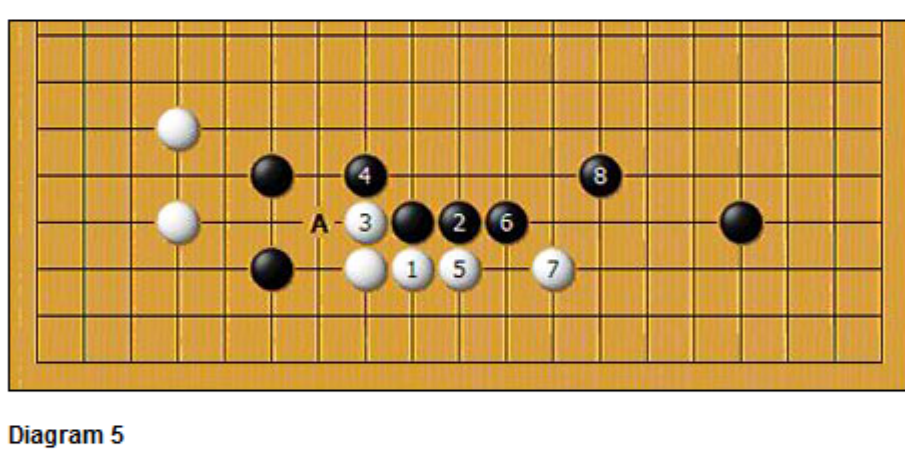


Diagram 5

If White pushes with 1, then the sequence up to 8 is a joseki. Again, Black can build a wall toward the center by allowing White to have territory in the corner and on the side. If you are worried about the weakness at A when playing Black 8, look at the next diagram.

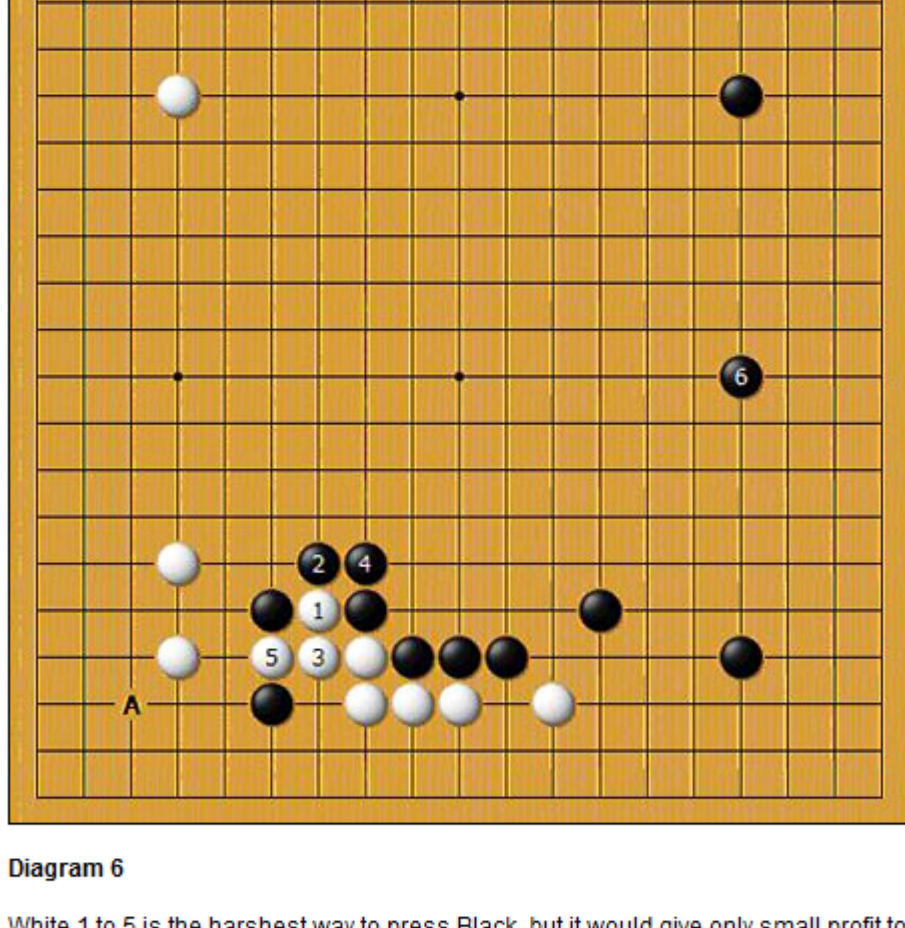


Diagram 6

White 1 to 5 is the harshest way to press Black, but it would give only small profit to White, and let Black make a huge territorial framework on the right side. Since Black can invade the lower left corner with A at any time, what White gains in that corner is not so big.

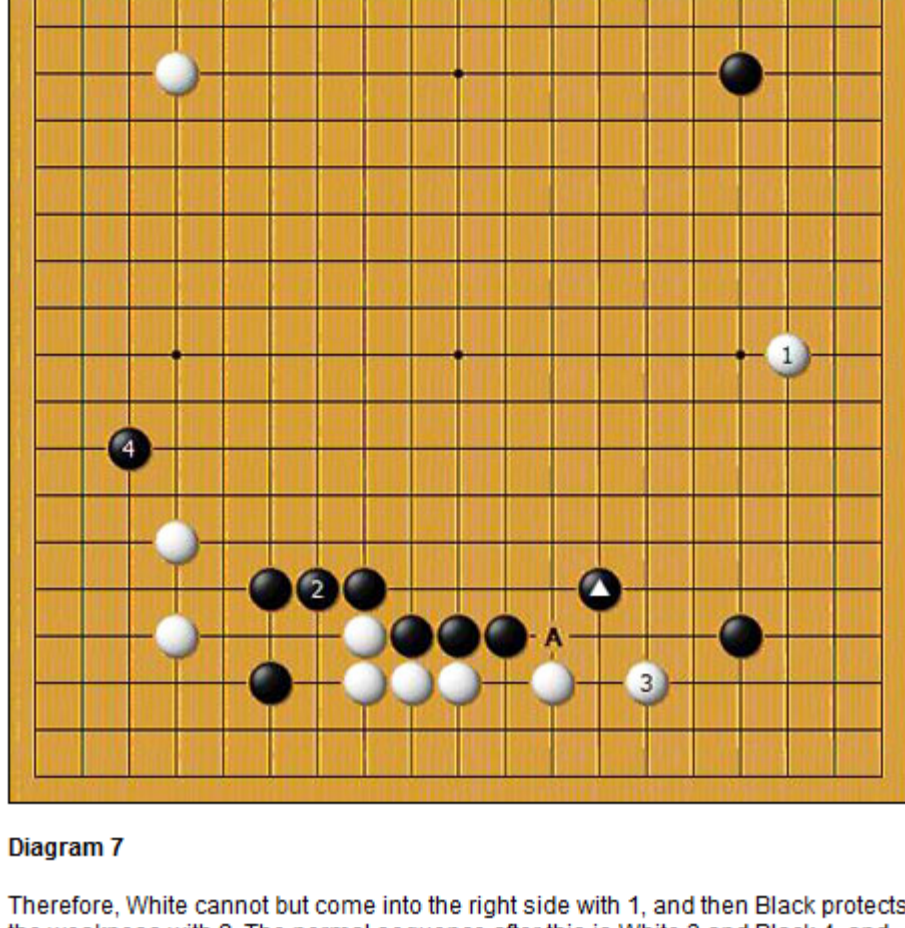


Diagram 7

Therefore, White cannot but come into the right side with 1, and then Black protects the weakness with 2. The normal sequence after this is White 3 and Black 4, and the overall situation is fair for both players. White cannot omit 3 in order to add a move on the left side, which is why the Δ -marked black move is better than A. The details of this situation will be continued in the next lesson.

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Lesson 136: Popular Openings (7)

By Nam Chi-hyung

In modern Baduk, you must remember that the center is no less important than the corner or the side. Black's opening, starting with two stones located on the star-points, is one case where you can see that importance. Josekis are also being changed according to this new trend of valuing the center. However, Baduk cannot be played when wholly dependent on a single concept.

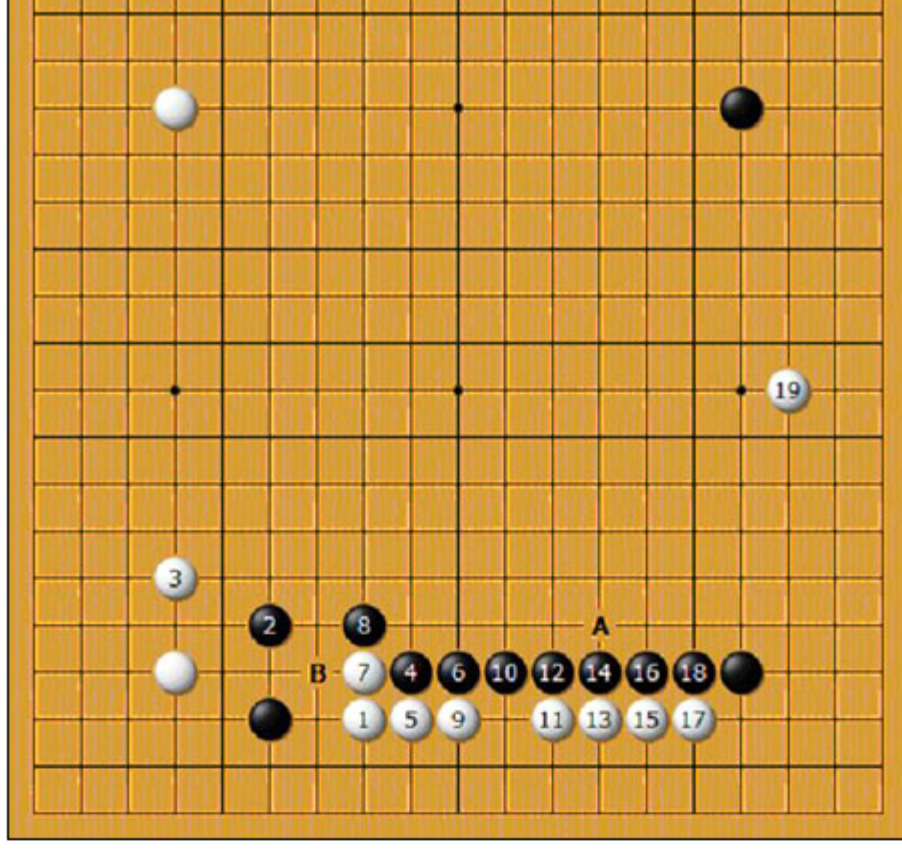


Diagram 1

The sequence from 1 to 11 is the same as the one we learned in the previous lesson. Since the main purpose of Black's choosing this sequence is to build up an influence toward the center, it may seem to be a good idea to push with 12 to 18 instead of jumping with a knight's move at A. However, an influence in the center cannot stand by itself. Even though Black's wall on the lower side is flawless, it cannot exercise its full power when White comes in the right side with 19. Moreover, B remains still, as Black's weakness.

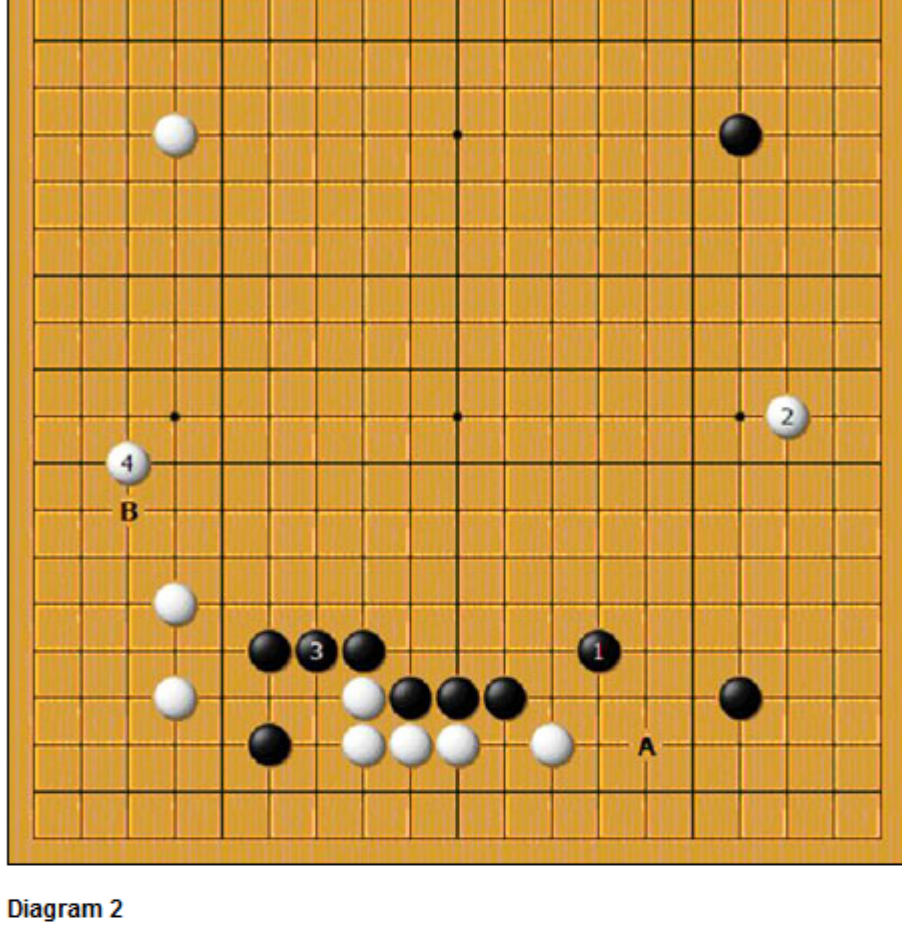


Diagram 2

Let's go back to Black's knight's jump at 1. As you already know, White has to divide the right side and then Black connects at 3 to protect the weakness there. In the previous lesson, White's answer against Black 3 was A, and then Black approached with B. But, what if White expands at 4? Black cannot develop the right side because of White 2. Will he also lose the chance to attack the white stones in the lower left corner?

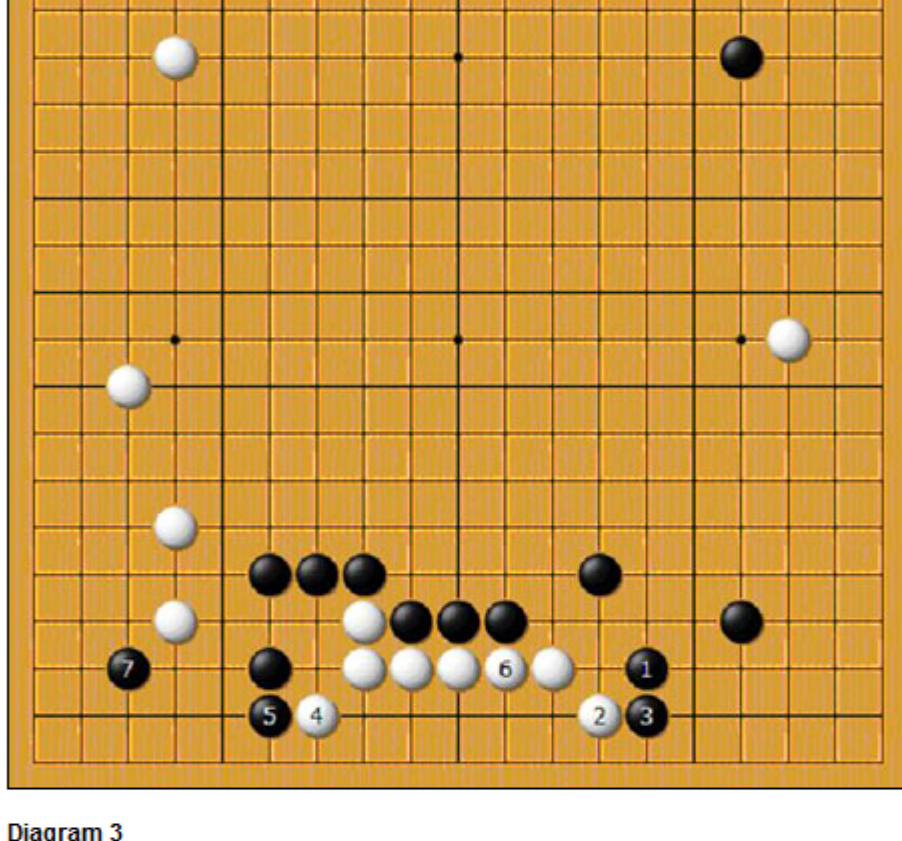


Diagram 3

Actually, the player who will be in trouble is not Black, but White. Since White didn't jump at 1, now Black squeezes White by occupying that position. Obviously, White can easily save his group on the side with 2 to 6. However, the life is no better than a death. As you can see, both the corners on the lower side come into Black's control, and White has only a few weak stones.

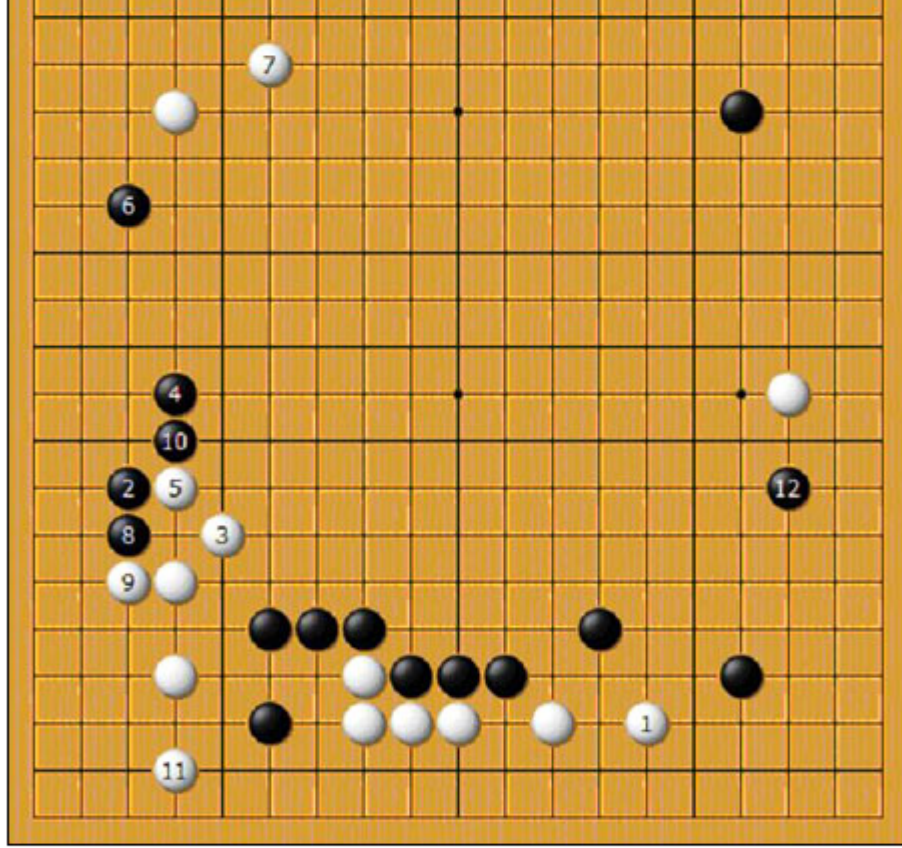


Diagram 4

Therefore, White must defend the lower side with 1, and the resulting sequence up to 12 is one of the modern openings. The outcome is well-balanced, with a fair distribution of territory and influence. Among the moves, Black must be sure to play 6 before 8 and 10; otherwise White will not answer in the corner, but counterattack the black group on the left side. Of course, it would be a hasty move for White to capture Black 2 instead of answering in the upper left corner with 7.

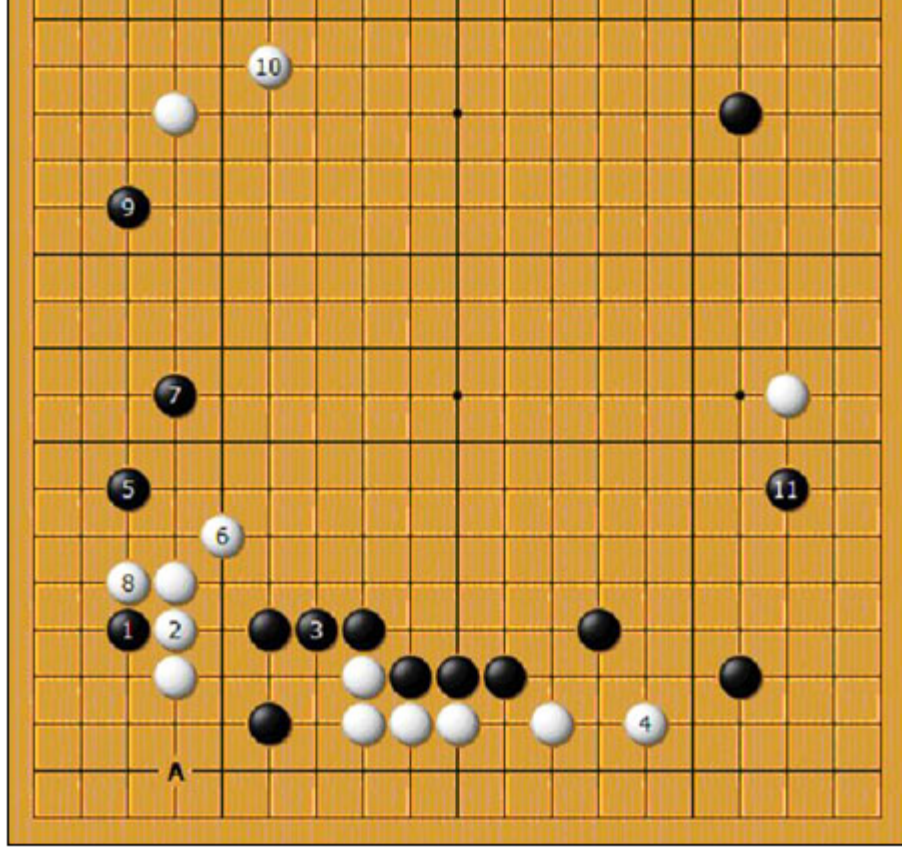


Diagram 5

It can be another option for Black to peep at 1 before connecting at 3. The main difference between the result of this diagram and the one of Diag.4 is whether a White stone is located at A or not. It is natural that Black prefers this outcome, since the corner is not yet perfectly White's, but Black's position on the left side is also not as strong as before. The choice between these two variations is up to you.

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Lesson 137: Popular Openings (8)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Many people love Baduk because of its unlimited diversity. A small change in just one move can create a totally different version of a game. There are many ways you can experience this fantastic feature of Baduk, and the joseki we've learned in the previous lesson can be one of them.

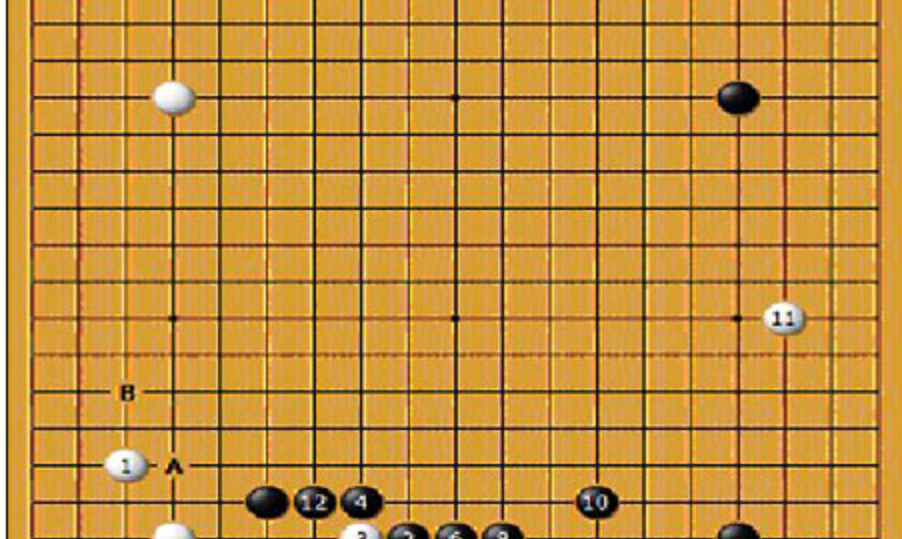


Diagram 1

The small change is White 1, which is played not at A but one line lower. Assuming that Black and White will play in the same way as when White 1 is at A, there will be no follow-up move for Black after White 13. As you see, now Black's approach with B cannot affect the white group in the lower left corner as before.

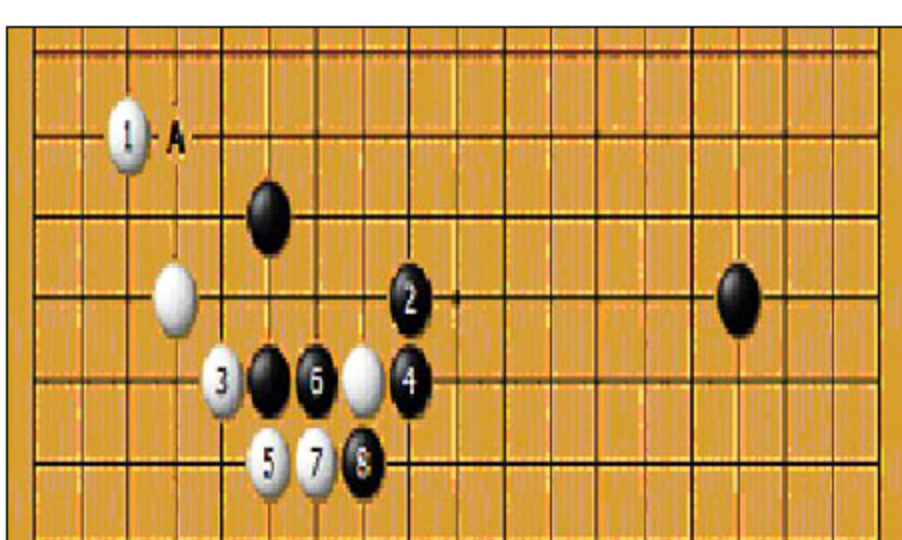


Diagram 2

White's position is also good with this sequence, since the corner territory of White is more secure than the one with White 1 at A.

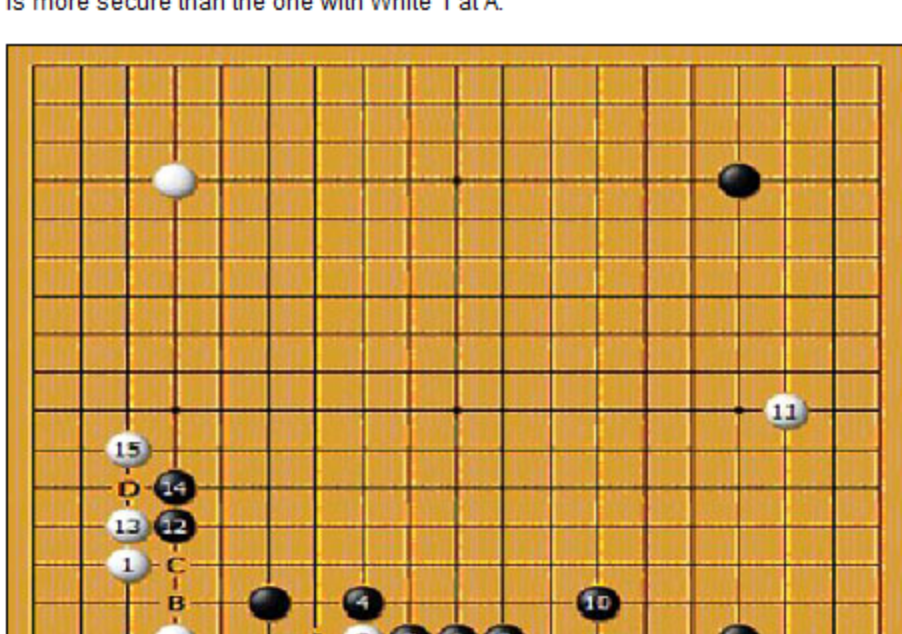


Diagram 3

Therefore, when White plays 1 with a knight's move, it's good for Black to press from above with 12 and 14 as shown. It is a cool way to protect the weakness at A, since Black can attach at B if White comes out at A. You can compare this with the situation where White 1 is at C. However, the result up to Black 16 is not unfavorable to Black. If White doesn't play 15 but jumps at 16, then Black will lock up the white group in the lower left corner, which will be damaging for White.

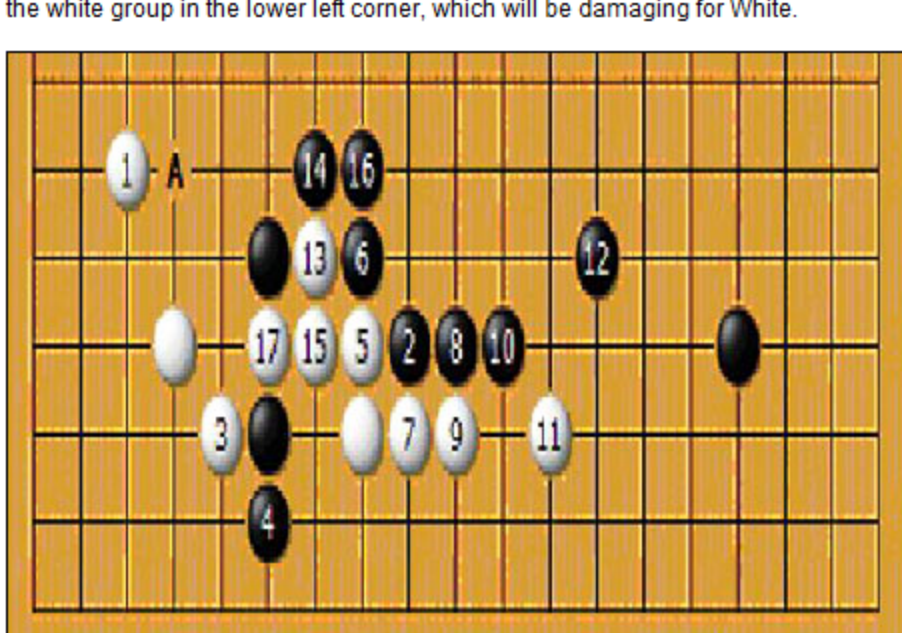


Diagram 4

If White attaches at 3, Black will come down at 4 instead of playing the sequence of Diag.2. The problem is that the corner will be quite big if White captures the two black stones with 13 to 17 after Black 12. When White 1 was located at A, there was a big possibility for Black to live inside the corner, but now the situation is changed, and Black's influence cannot make up the loss in that corner. Therefore, Black needs to do something before jumping at 12.

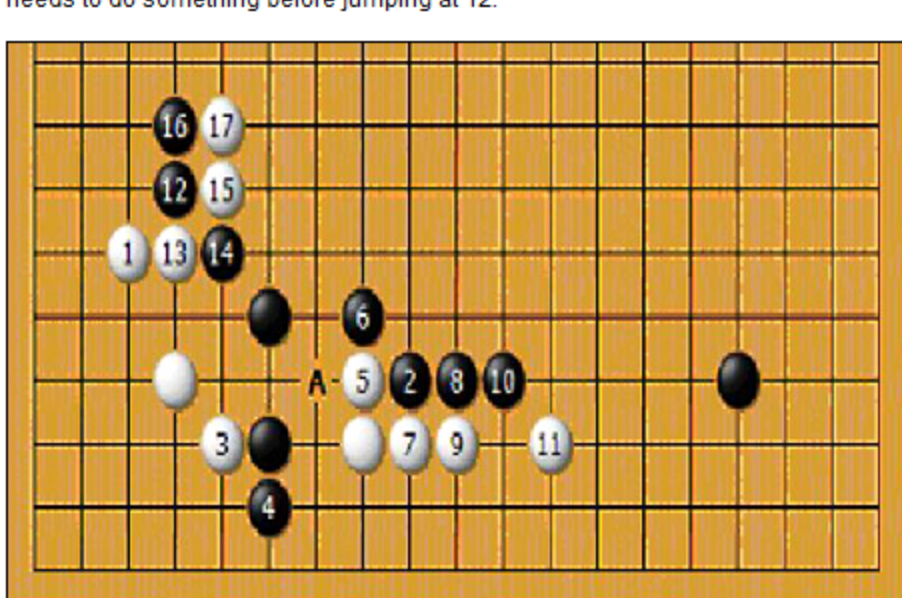


Diagram 5

You may think that Black's shoulder-hit at 12 can work again here, as it did in Diag.3. However, now White can push up with 13 and cut at 15, because the fight becomes more favorable to him owing to the exchange of White 3 and Black 4. That exchange made the white group in the corner stronger, and left the powerful peeping move at A to White, as you can see.

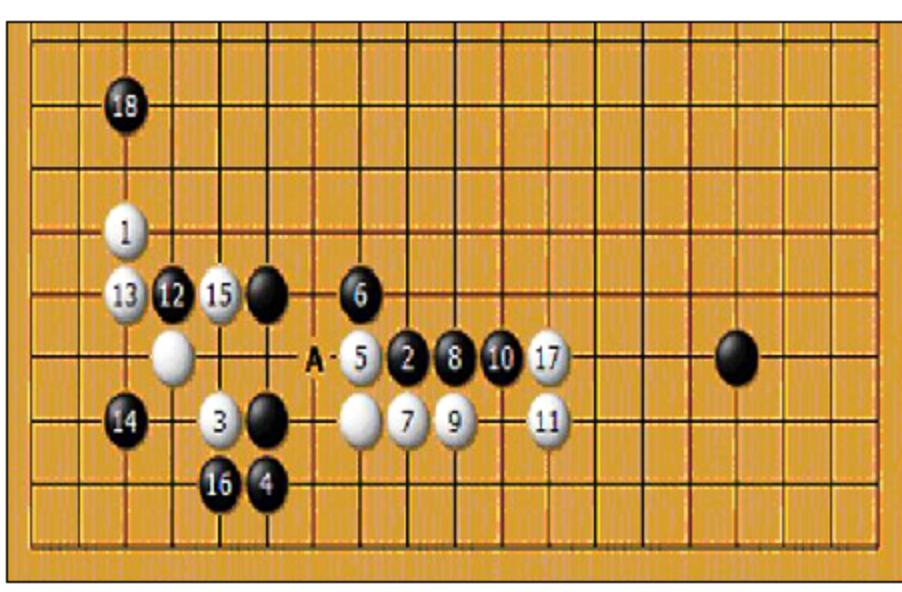


Diagram 6

Black's means to break through this hostile situation is the attachment at 12. It is a way to eliminate the weakness at A by making territory in the corner with the weak stones. Up to 18, the result is fair for both White, who prevented Black from making an influence toward the center, and Black, who got territory in the corner and an opportunity to attack the white group on the left side. This is how a new joseki-like sequence is born.

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Lesson 138 : Mastering Carpenter's Square (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Have you ever heard of the Carpenter's Square? It is one of the most difficult life and death positions in Baduk. In addition, they say that anyone who masters this position must be at least a 5-dan since there are various types of Carpenter's Square. Before we go any further, I'll tell you a small secret. Whenever I am asked about the variations of the Carpenter's Square, I just say "it's a ko"

without reading thoroughly, and this works most of the times. While there are plenty of different ways to make a ko with a carpenter's square, there is no difference in the fact that it ends up as a ko, no matter what. Well, let's take a closer look.

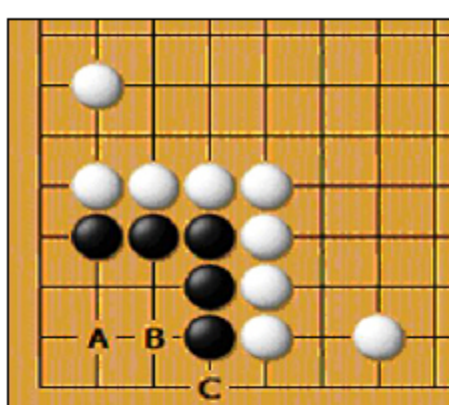


Diagram 1

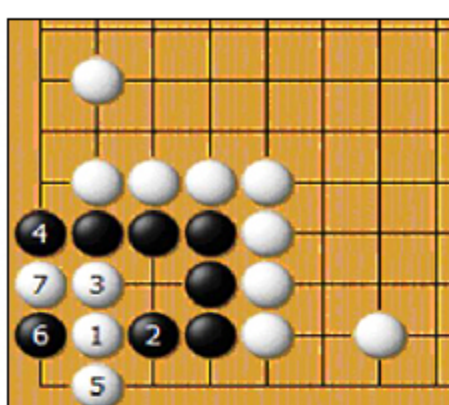


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

Black's position is the famous Carpenter's square; we will start with the basic arrangement of the position, with white stones surrounding the black stones without any empty points. Black occupies a pretty big space and looks safe, but it is actually vulnerable to White's attack. As you may guess, A is the vital point for both White and Black. Furthermore, B and C can be good attacking moves for White when there is no empty point between black and white stones as here. In this lesson, A is the only concern.

Diagram 2

Although I said a Carpenter's Square ends up with a ko almost every time, Black 2 will bring a death. Up to White 7 is an Eye vs. No Eye situation, and the Black group is dead.

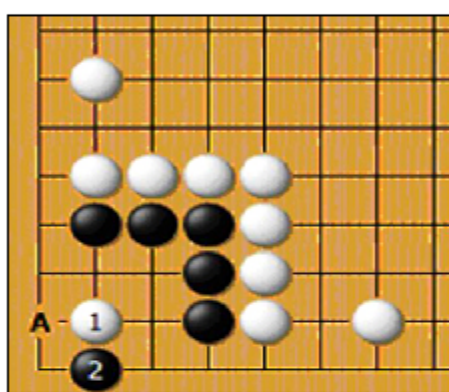


Diagram 3

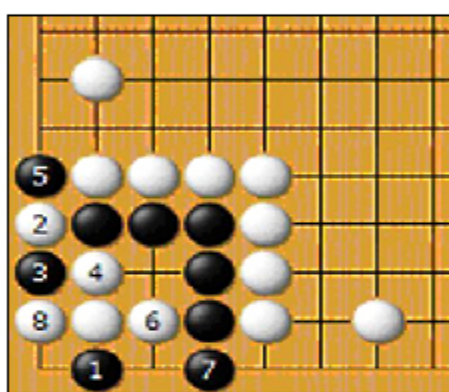


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

The key move is Black 2. Now you are one step closer to a ko. Of course A is the same as Black 2.

Diagram 4

However, an error can still bring death to Black. Here, Black 3 is a mistake that turns the corner into a flower-five shape, which means Black is dead

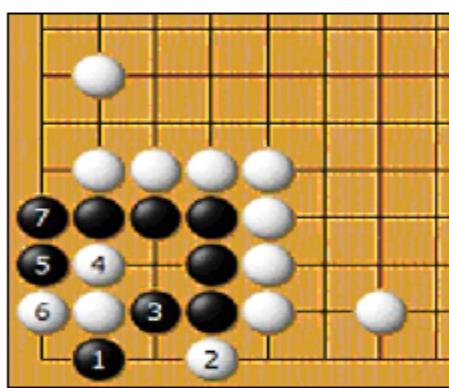


Diagram 5

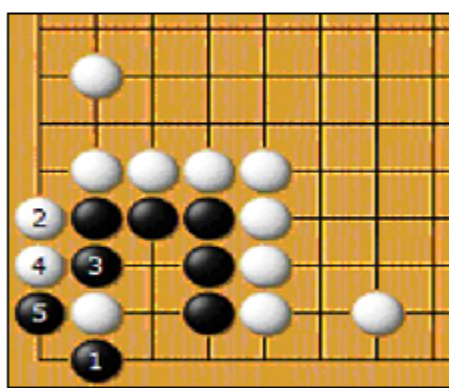


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

On the contrary, White's mistake can let Black live. White's bend at 2 looks quite similar to the one in Diag.4, but the result is totally different. The situation in the corner up to 7 is a seki with a bent-four shape, which means Black is alive. As White, you should be careful not to bend in the wrong direction.

Diagram 6

When White bends in the correct way, it is best for Black to turn with 3 and make a ko with 5, since it is impossible to block at 4.

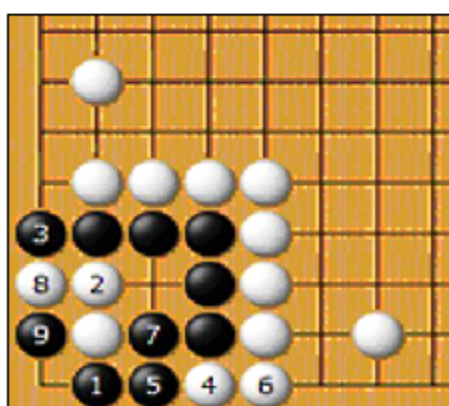


Diagram 7

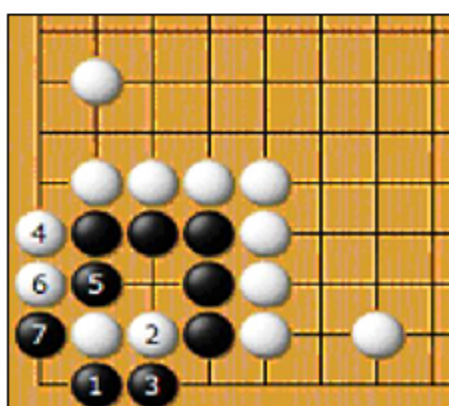


Diagram 8

Diagram 7

To butt at 2 is another way to lead a ko. The most important among White's moves here is 8. If White places it at 9, Black will make a seki by playing at 8. Both Diag.6 and Diag.7 end up with a ko, but the characteristics of the kos are different. I prefer the one in this diagram as White, because he will lose less even if he loses the ko.

Diagram 8

White 2 cannot make a significant difference. The key move is Black 5 and it's a ko up to 7. Be careful not to block at 6, which would turn the situation almost the same as the one in Diag.4.

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Lesson 139 : Mastering Carpenter's Square (2)

By Nam Chi-hyung

In the previous lesson, we learned the most basic variations that would take place when the symmetrical vital point of a Carpenter's Square is attacked. In this lesson, you will see what else is possible for an attack, and the proper ways of defending.

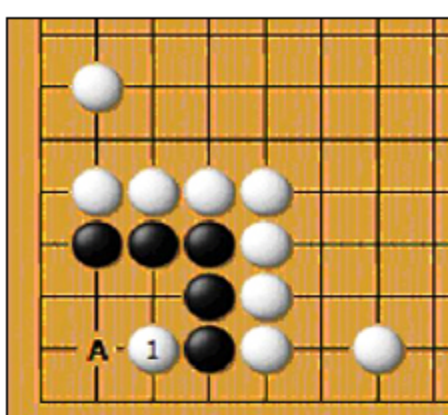


Diagram 1

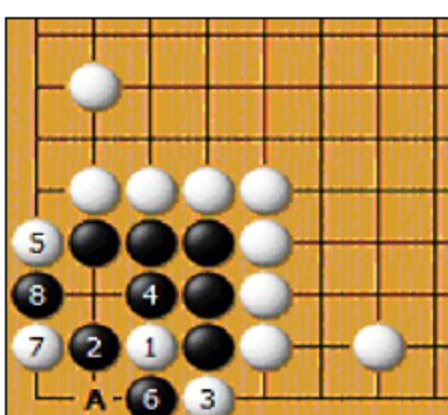


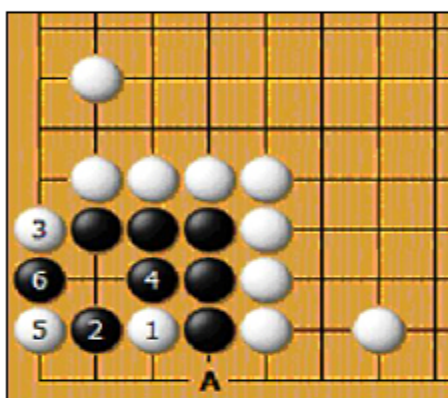
Diagram 2

Diagram 1

Apart from White's attacking move 1, the overall situation is the same as the one we dealt with in the last lesson. Before learning how to answer it as Black, remember that White 1 is only possible when there is no empty intersection between the black stones in the corner and the surrounding white stones. Since we already know that A is the vital point of the Carpenter's Square, let's start with Black's answer there. You still remember that most of the variations of this shape end with a ko, don't you?

Diagram 2

The sequence from Black 2 to Black 8 shows a way that turns the corner into a ko fight, and of course, this is the best result Black can get. You may wonder why White didn't play at A, which turns the corner instantly into a ko, but chose to bend at 5 instead. If so, then please check who will be the first one to take off his opponent's stone. In a ko, the most important thing is to be the first taker.



Lesson 140: Mastering Carpenter's Square (3)

When you solve a life and death problem, you often try all the possible moves in the position to find the answer. But, even in a small local position, it is a huge task to check all the possible moves. For example, you've seen only two attacking methods in a Carpenter's Square and several possible answers for each, and there are many more variations still left. Therefore, if you don't know the key points of the shape and if you don't know what the attacking options are, you will not find the answer in time during a real game.

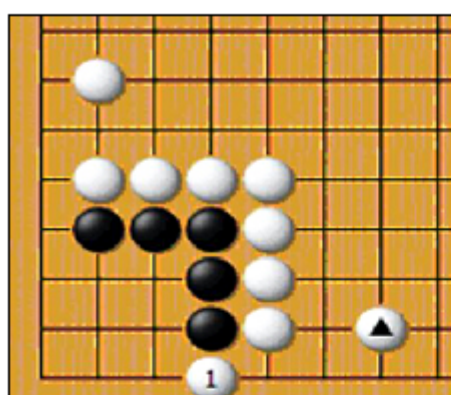


Diagram 1

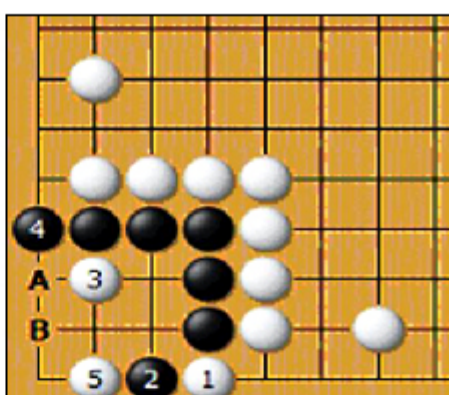


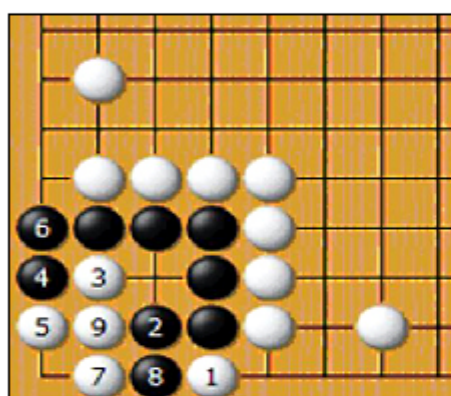
Diagram 2

Diagram 1

White's bend with 1 is another probable attack of the Carpenter's Square. As you may know, it is possible only when there is an ally such as the ▲-marked white stone here.

Diagram 2

Black 2 may be the move against White's bend that comes to every player's mind. However, that move causes a death to Black. White 3 is a brilliant move in this case and there is no way Black can save the group after White 5. It doesn't help Black's situation to play at A instead of descending down with 4. White will block with B against Black A, forcing Black to connect at 4 and then play 5. In both cases, the corner is an Eye vs. No Eye.



Lesson 141: Mastering Carpenter's Square (4)

We've seen the simplest example of the Carpenter's Square in the last three lessons. There was no empty point, and the shapes of both the defending and the attacking sides were flawless. From today, we're going to study more complicated versions of the Carpenter's Square. The meaning of the moves will change, and you will become more confused.

Diagram 1

The position we will study in this diagram lacks a stone at the x-marked point. Different from the one we dealt with in the previous lessons, this one is less artificial. In fact, we can often meet this position in a real game with a variation of a 4-5 point joseki. The sequence from 1 to 9 shows how this shape is made. Black 6 is played elsewhere.

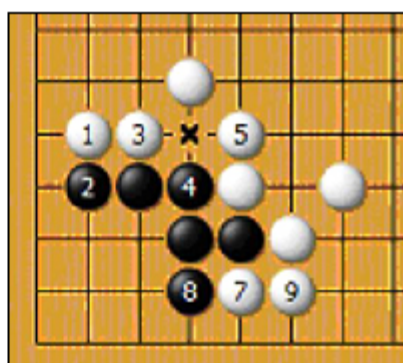


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Of course, the empty point works favorably for Black rather than White, but it is still not possible for Black to avoid a ko fight to save the group. White attacks with 1, the vital point of this shape, and Black 2 is the easiest way to make a ko as you already know. The result will be the same, even if White plays A and Black answers with B before White's bending at 3.

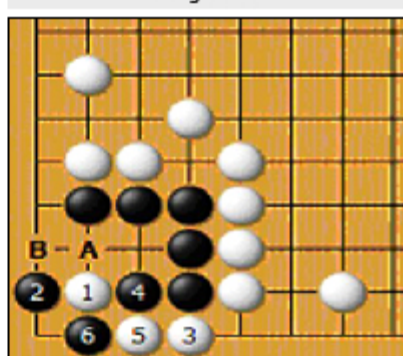


Diagram 2

Diagram 3

I expect that you already know why Black cannot block with 4 against White 3. Until now, nothing much has changed.

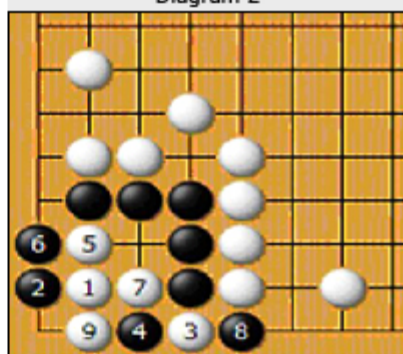


Diagram 3

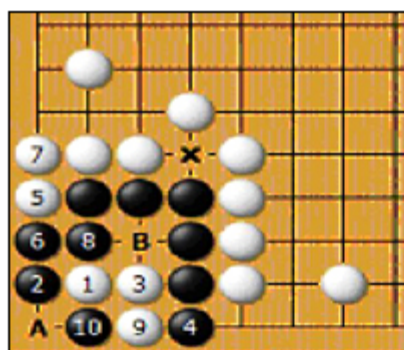


Diagram 4

Diagram 5

However, White 3 here doesn't work when the x-marked point is empty. Now, Black is perfectly alive because he can play B when White captures Black 10 with A. If White plays 9 instead of playing 5 and 7, he can make a thousand-year ko, as you can verify yourself. However, it is obvious anyway that a direct ko is better for White than a thousand-year ko.

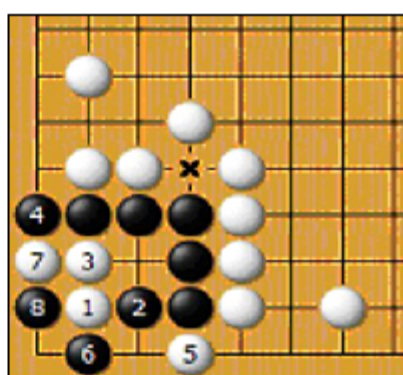


Diagram 5

Diagram 6

Another twist with no empty point at x and a bending with the Δ -marked stone is a second possibility. When White attacks with the vital point at 1, it's important for Black to attach from the opposite side of the bending as shown here. Now, White 3 is not a good move, because it allows Black to live. Owing to the Δ -marked stone, White 5 cannot be as powerful as before. Up to Black 8, Black lives with a dual-life situation.

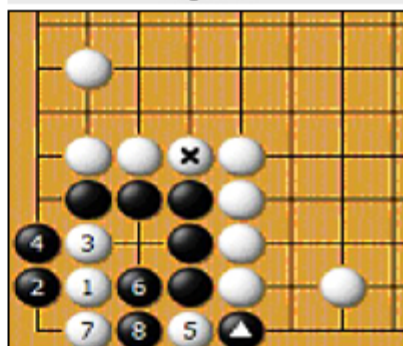


Diagram 6

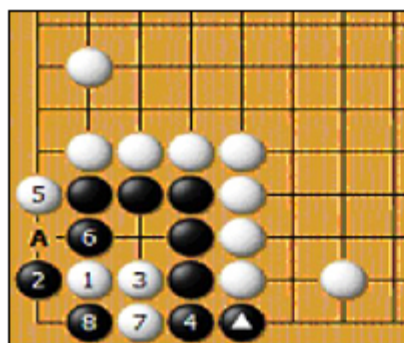


Diagram 7

Diagram 7

In this case, White should butt toward the Δ -marked bending move. Different from when there is an empty point, it doesn't help Black to block directly against White 5 with A. The optimal result in this case is also a ko.

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Lesson 142: Mastering Carpenter's Square (5)

In the previous lesson, you've seen two variations of the Carpenter's Square, one with an empty intersection and the other with a bend. There can be other ways to go further with more variations, but mine are a different example with an empty intersection, and another one with two bends. I hope they help you become less dizzy.

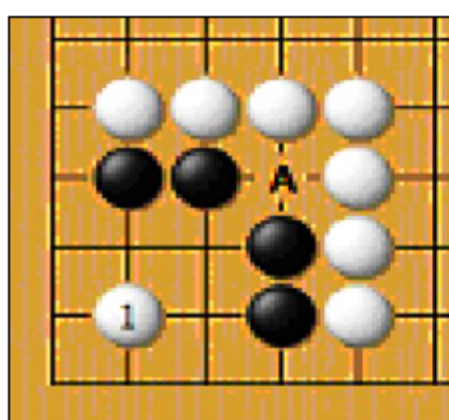


Diagram 1

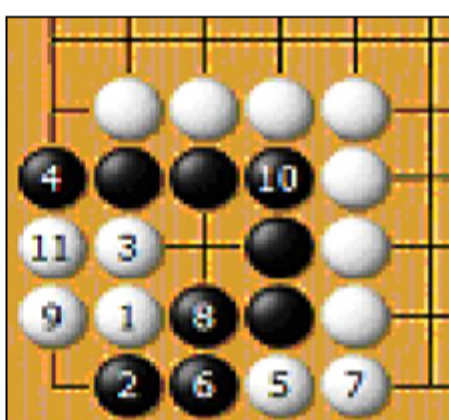


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

The position in this diagram is different in two ways from the basic Carpenter's Square; there is no black stone at A to make Black's shape perfect, and White's siege has an empty intersection also at A. To tell the conclusion first, these two points kill the black group. Of course, the fatal attacking point here is White 1.

Diagram 2

I expect now you will try Black 2 as the first possible move. However, because Black has a stone at 10, the attempt to make a dual-life as before cannot succeed.

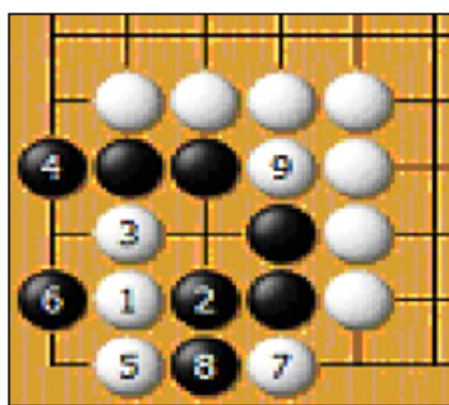


Diagram 3

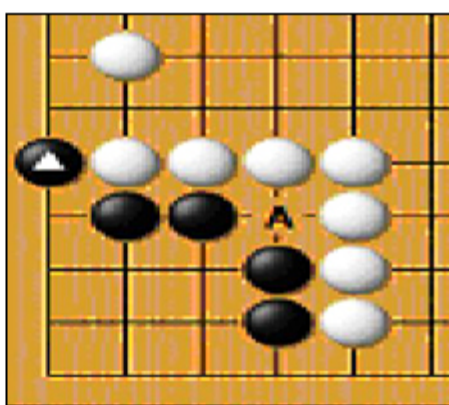


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

It is obvious that Black 2 is not any better as White can play 9 after the exchange of White 7 and Black 8. Therefore, if Black's shape is flawed with A, it cannot be saved even with a ko.

Diagram 4

However, a presence of a bend like the $\triangle$ -marked black stone can change the whole situation. Now it is possible for Black to make a ko.

Diagram 5

Do you remember that when there is a bend, Black 2 here is a better move than the attachment at 4? That is also valid in this position. You just be careful not to turn with 3 instead of Black 2.

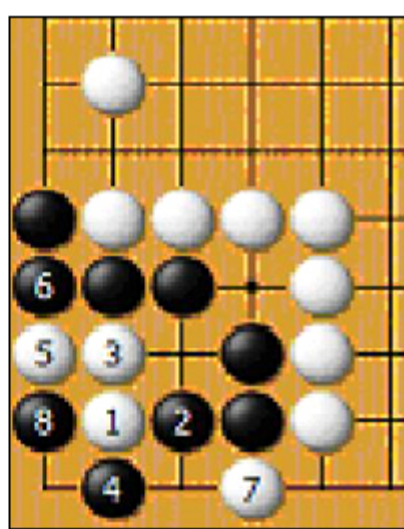


Diagram 5

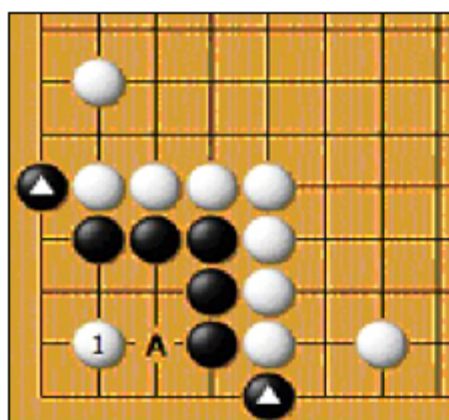


Diagram 6

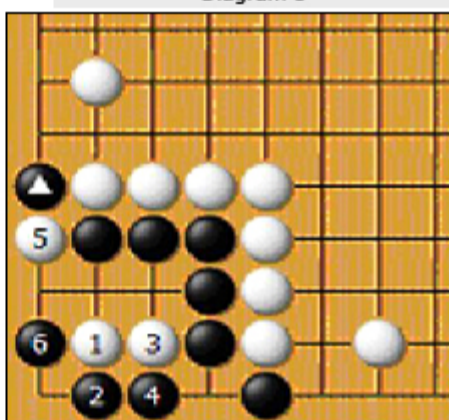


Diagram 7

Diagram 6

For the next variation, let's look at the position with two bends at the $\triangle$ -marked points. White 1 is a normal attack, but the fiercest as you know. Okay, then, what help do these two bends provide to the black group's life? For sure, Black can make a direct ko by playing at A and following the sequence already shown in Diag.5. However, that's out of the question.

Diagram 7

In this case, Black's attachment becomes a good move again. You may remember that White 3 is one of the ko-making moves when Black attaches at 2. However, with the $\triangle$ -marked black bend, the situation is totally different. As you see, Black can play 6 owing to the bend and the group is perfectly safe. By the way, you remember that White's answer with 6 instead of 3 against Black's attachment at 2 just let Black live with a dual-life, don't you?

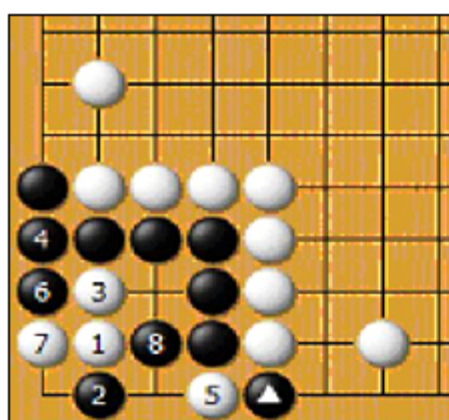


Diagram 8

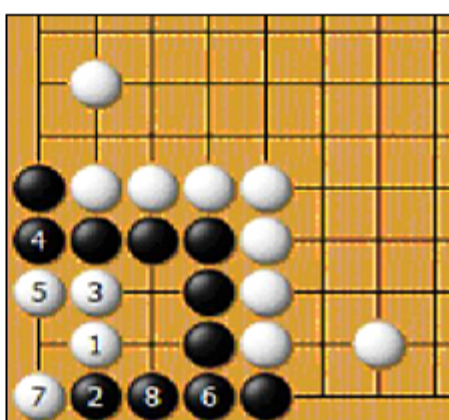


Diagram 9

Diagram 8

What about White 3 here? This can be either good or bad depending on the follow-up. However, White 5 is not a good move because Black can make a dual-life with 6 to 8 owing to the Black's bend at $\triangle$.

Diagram 9

When Black connects at 4, White 5 is a good move. Of course, White still cannot kill the black group right away. The result of the sequence up to 8 is a thousand-year ko.

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Lesson 143: Mastering Carpenter's Square (6)

I really appreciate those of you who followed all the lessons about the Carpenter's Square so far. It was a long journey and I'm going to make this one the last. Of course, there are many more possible variations of the Carpenter's Square, but now I'm sure that you can figure out what you need to consider when encountering new shapes.

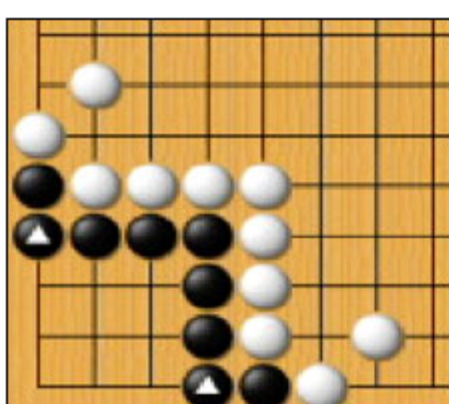


Diagram 1

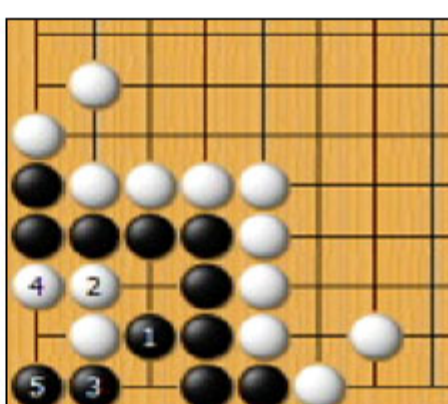


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

This is another example of a theoretically-made situation. The essential distinction of this shape is the two ja-marked black stones on the first line. These two stones make the corner invulnerable to an attempt by the enemy to kill you.

Diagram 2

The attacking move of White is already decided, and what matters is Black's answer. Here, Black turns with 1 and the outcome up to Black 5 is a dual-life

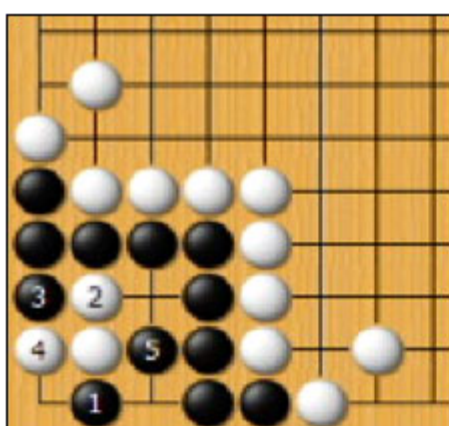


Diagram 3

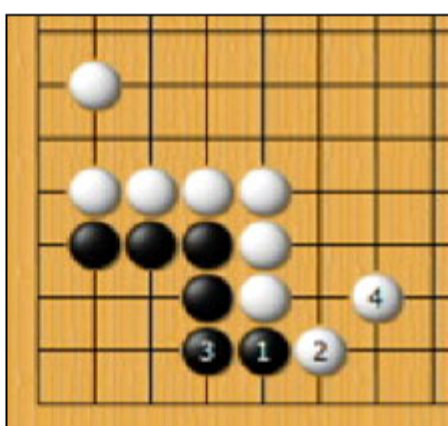


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

Even though Black attaches at 1, the result is still the same as before, namely a dual-life. Thus, when there are two allied stones on the first line, the corner is safe in the matter of life and death. What you should have in mind is that the Black's position in Diag.1 does not possess any territory as it is. Because White can make a dual-life in sente, Black has to add a move right after it becomes the position in Diag. 1 in order to make the corner territory. However, it is worth only 8 points, so it's not easy to get a chance to play it out.

Diagram 4

This situation can happen more often than not because there are many cases where Black bends and connects with 1 and 3. Black's corner looks pretty safe and even big. However, if Black doesn't reinforce the shape, no territory will be left for him.

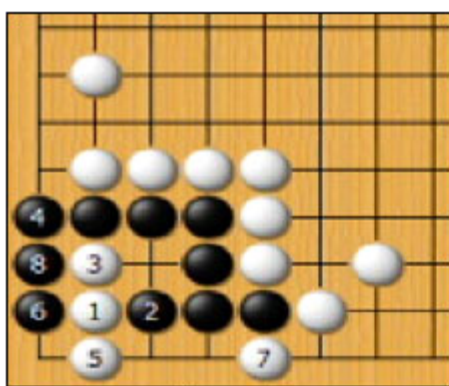


Diagram 5

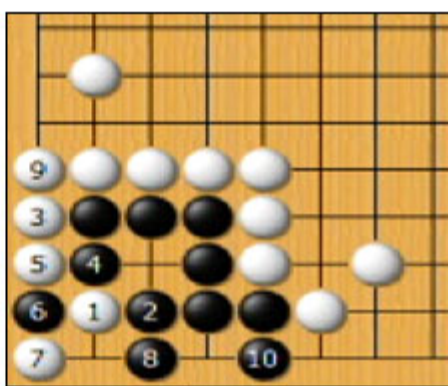


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

Of course Black is not killed even though he plays elsewhere. But, as you see, up to 8, Black can live only with a dual-life and even in gote. Therefore, as in the first example, Black has to add a move to the corner if he wants to save the territory.

Diagram 6

If White bends at 3 instead of butting with 4, Black should not block at 5 but make an eye with 4. When White connects with 5, Black can make another eye by sacrificing 6 and then descending with 8. If Black plays 5 instead of 4, the corner turns into a ko.

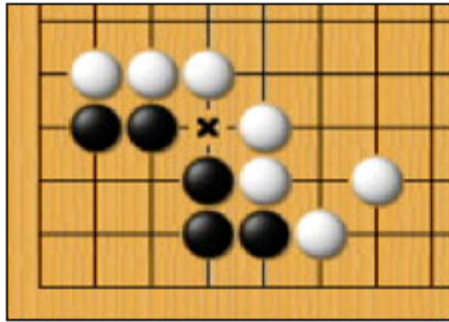


Diagram 7

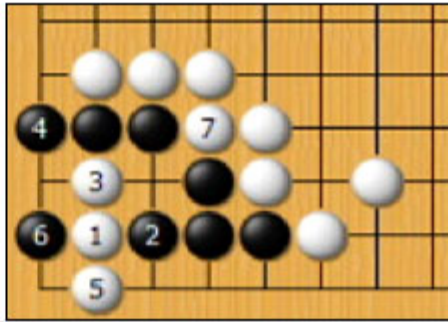


Diagram 8

Diagram 7

Then, what if there isn't a black stone at x ? As you already know, in Carpenter's Square, the x -marked point is one of the vital points.

Diagram 8

It is impossible now for Black to make a dual-life by turning with 2 as in Diag.5. After Black 6, White 7 is a good move and the black group is dead.

Diagram 9

In this case, Black should turn with 2 and the corner is a ko up to 10, which is the best result for Black. Black also can make a different ko by playing 6 at 7.

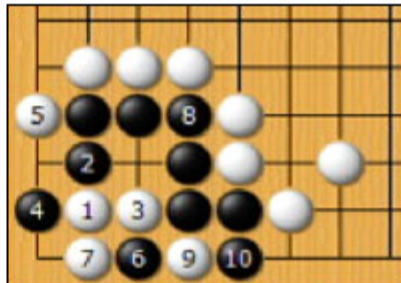


Diagram 9

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Lesson 144: Learning From Review

By Nam Chi-hyung

Reviewing your own games is an excellent method of improving your understanding of Baduk. You can do it by yourself, with your opponent, or with the help of stronger players. When you review professionals' games, you can also think about possible better moves, criticize wrong moves, and learn their brilliant moves in fighting, etc. However, all these will be quite imaginary for you, and it is harder to keep the wisdom gained from another's game than the one from your own.



The first step in reviewing is to memorize your own game. You can get help from a recorder, or you can do it yourself while playing the game with paper and pencil, or even an electric game recording device. I recommend using as few of these aids as possible, relying only on your own memory. It is not easy at first, of course. However, if you keep on trying, you will be able to draw a logical map which will show you the paths you took. If all the moves you played in a game are made from proper reasoning, it will be difficult to forget what you thought at a specific moment of a game.

To record a game yourself while playing is not the same as using the GPS in a car or the spell-check in a computer. You cannot learn anything from the recording itself, and it is valuable only when you use it after the game. Also, to keep recording while playing can be pretty disruptive to your game. On the contrary, if you try to remember your moves without any other help, you can focus on the game and learn to reason on your own as well. I highly recommend that you record your game afterward, relying on your reasoning.

The next step is the reviewing itself. It is much better to have someone stronger than you and your opponent when you're reviewing. The question is what to review.

Usually a review focuses on the mistakes of both players. People want to know if there was a chance to change the result of the game. Therefore, most of the time, people spend their energy trying to find out the loser's mistakes. However, this kind of reviewing would be more local than general. You can also miss the chance to raise the level of your ordinary moves to brilliant ones. Sometimes you have to blame not the individual mistakes, but the entire plan or strategy. Sometimes it is more gainful to appreciate the winner's good moves than to be sorry about the loser's bad moves.

It is also necessary to be realistic when you're reviewing. The purpose of reviewing isn't to console the loser. You may feel like saying, "if I played this, I would have won," but it is only if. More often than not, the winners agree with the losers just not to upset them and their "I was lucky" is a politeness. Please keep in mind that a review is not another game, but a learning process.

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Lesson 145: Patterns with Double-Approach 1

By Nam Chi-hyung

Star-point joseki variations are becoming more and more diverse in their development. One reason for that, among many, is the increasing number of pincer-joseki variations now being played. In the past, most pincer-joseki variations involved the 3-4 point, and it was considered possible only when there was an ally to play a pincer in conjunction with a star-point.

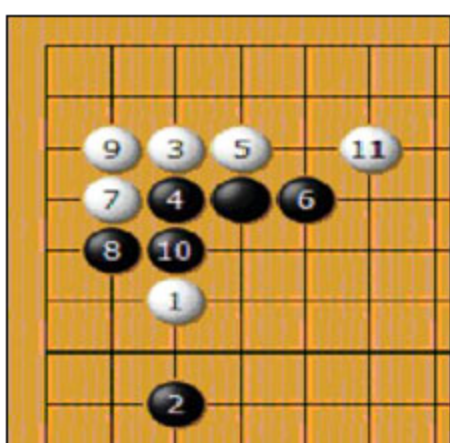


Diagram 1

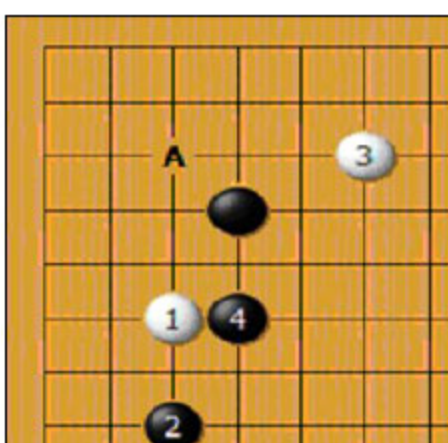


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

Black's pincer with 2 is what initiated this pincer boom for the star-point joseki. As I have mentioned numerous times, Baduk of today is more center-focused, and influence is more important than ever. Therefore, the result up to 11 is regarded as being favorable to Black.

Diagram 2

So, instead of coming into the corner with A, White chooses the double-approach with 3. The variations we're going to study are the ones that start with this second approach. The most popular answer by Black to this approach is Black 4 here.

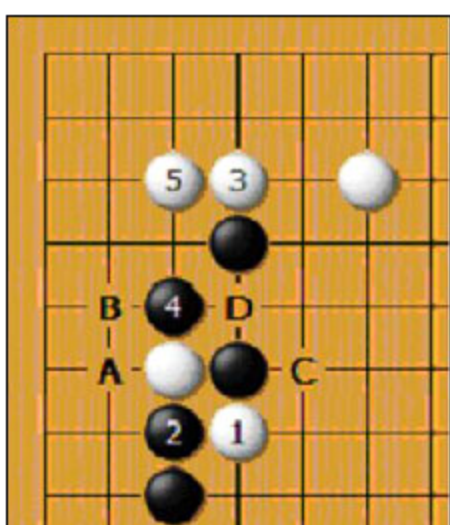


Diagram 3

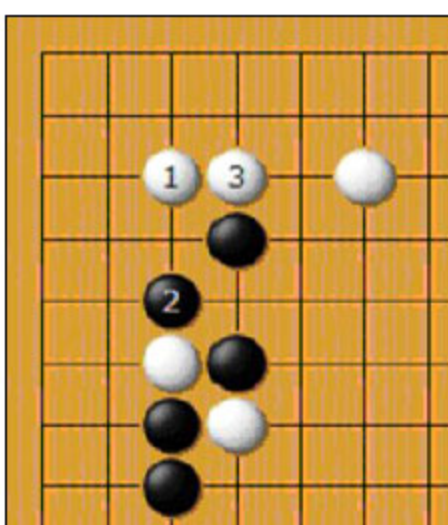


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

After Black 4 in Diag.2, White exchanges 1 with 2 in order to make the deal in the corner more favorable to him, and then attaches at 3. Black 4 is one possible answer against this attachment. Then White takes up the corner with 5 and Black moves elsewhere. This is the most peaceful outcome, of course, but not the most desirable for Black because he didn't get the influence attempted by the pincer. The sequence A~D that starts with White A helps White to have power in the center, so is also a bonus for White.

Diagram 4

White can come in at the 3-3 point instead of the attachment at 3. Again, Black 2 is the easiest way to finish the corner and the result is exactly the same as the one in Diag.3.

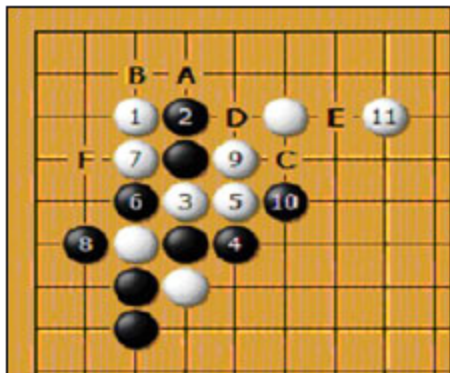


Diagram 5



Diagram 6

Diagram 5

The sequence in Diag.4 was considered a joseki even until just several years ago, but no longer so. Players found that it is not difficult for Black to get a better result by blocking with 2. The sequence up to White 11 is inevitable and Black's influence toward center, powered up by the capture with 6 and 8, is quite satisfactory for Black. If White omits 11, the sequence A~E, starting with Black A, will be very painful for White. Even after White 11, Black still has a gratifying follow-up with Black A, White B, and then Black F.

Diagram 6

Therefore, White has to give up coming into the corner with the 3-3 point, and attach at 1 as shown here. Against this attachment, Black 2 is a more proactive move than Black 4 in Diag.3. Once again, the sequence up to White 15 is inevitable, mostly composed of ataris and answers.

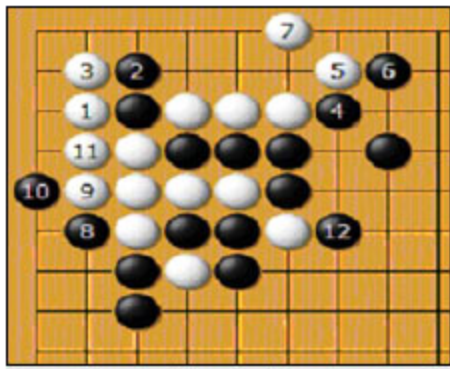


Diagram 7

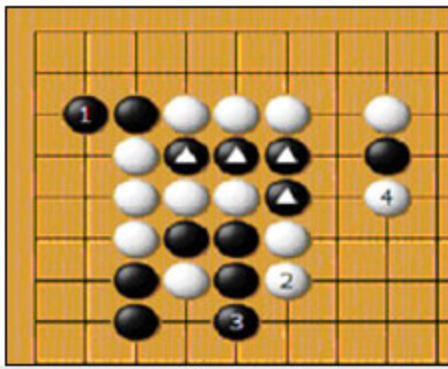


Diagram 8

Diagram 7

If White doesn't attach at 15 in Diag.6 but draws back to the corner with 1 and 3, Black will welcome it happily since he can lock up White's corner territory with 4 to 10 in sente and take the influence in the center with 12.

Diagram 8

If you worry about Black 1 here being like 15 in Diag.6, don't. Owing to the brilliant attachment of White 4, it is not White but the Δ -marked black stones that are captured.

You already know why the sequence shown in Diag.6 is inevitable. Let's study the following sequences in the next lesson.

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Lesson 146: Patterns with Double-Approach 2

By Nam Chi-hyung

Most popular josekis being played in the 21st century are so big that they occupy about a quarter of a Baduk board. The variations initiated by the double-approach we're going to study in this lesson are no exception.

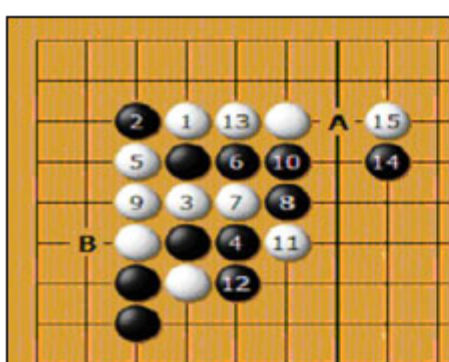


Diagram 1

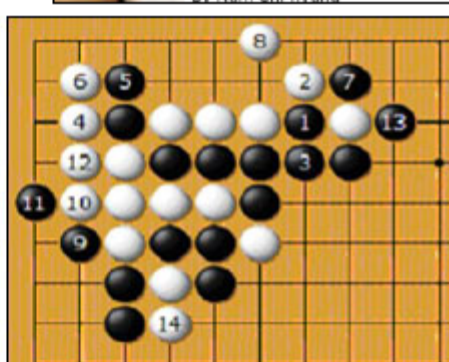


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

We already studied the sequence from White 1 to 15 in the last lesson. Nowadays, most top players play White 1 instead of coming into the corner at 2 because they know that Black's playing at 1 against White's 3-3 is a very forceful move. After Black 2, the sequence up to 15 is inevitable for both. However, it is not easy for Black to decide where to play after White 15. The two main choices are A and B.

Diagram 2

If Black chooses A in Diag.1, the sequence up to 13 can be easily expected. The difficult part of this choice is the unforeseeable fights that may be started by White 14, which White will usually play right after Black 13.

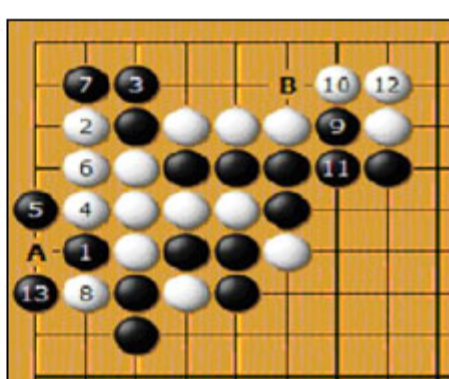
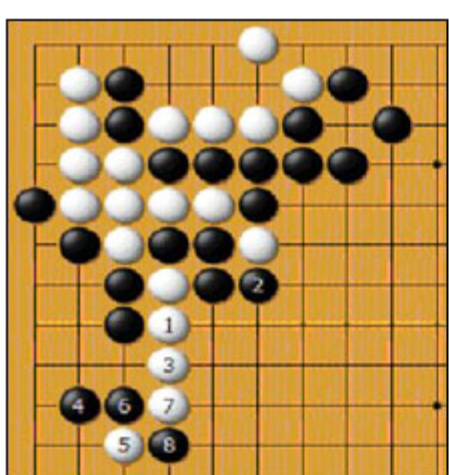


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

Diagram 3

The sequence from 2 to 8 is an example of the various fights after White 1. It is almost impossible to describe all the variations following Black 8, but it is certain that all of them are very difficult for both sides.

Diagram 4

Black's bending at 1 means that he wants to make a ko with 13. Of course, what matters in every ko is the number of ko threats. But, you know, this is a joseki variation, which happens in the very beginning of a game most of the times. Therefore, let's assume that there is no other ko threat for either player but the local ones. Black has a ko threat at B against White's capture at A.

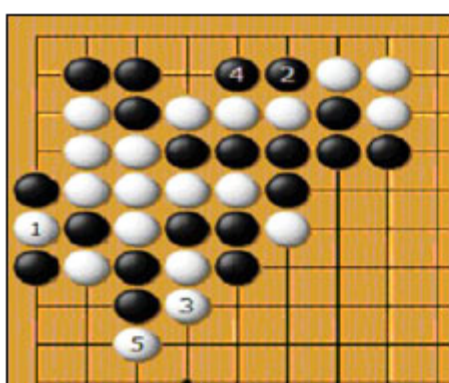


Diagram 5

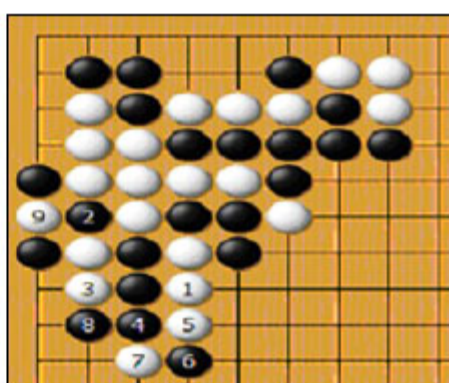


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

However, White also has an ace up his sleeve. As he comes out with 3, the number of White's ko threats becomes uncountable, so that Black cannot go on with the ko fight. Hence, Black ends the ko by capturing the three white stones with 4, and White captures two black stones with 5. The outcome up to 5 is quite satisfactory for both.

Diagram 6

It is too much for Black to continue the ko with 2. After White takes back the ko with 9, Black has no ko threat to keep on playing the ko anyway.

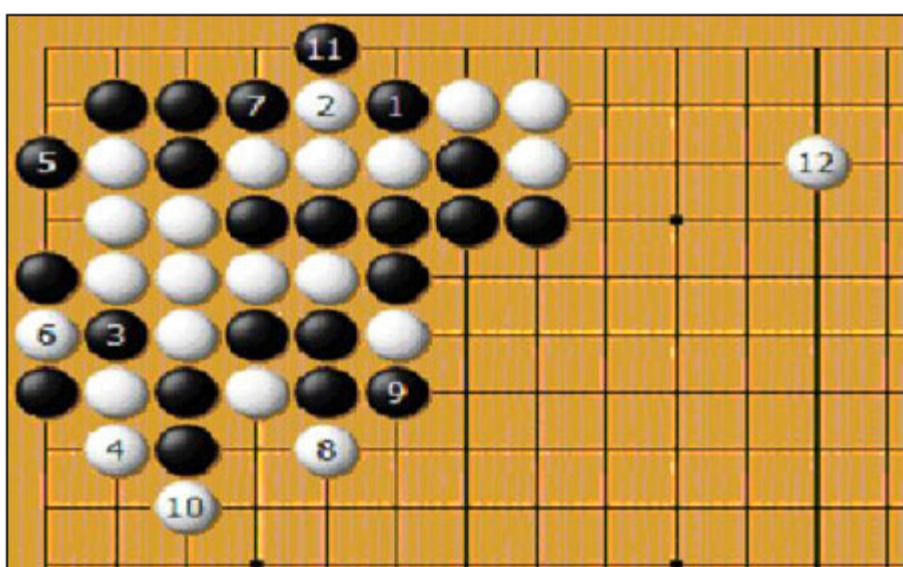


Diagram 7

Diagram 7

It is also possible for White to answer against Black 1 with 2 because Black has to play one more move with 5 in order to make the ko direct. White cannot answer Black 7 since there will be no ko threat for him which can stop Black from capturing the eight white stones in the corner. The reason why White let Black capture the four white stones with 11 is that he wants to take a sente and play 12 on the upper side. Although White's territory on the left side is smaller than the one in Diag.6, this result seems a bit more favorable to White as he can save the three isolated white stones on the upper side with 12.

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Lesson 147: Patterns with Double-Approach 3

By Nam Chi-hyung

Double-approach joseki variations usually occur when your opponent pincers the first approach. We learned the variations with the one-point lower pincer in the two previous lessons. Now we're going to study the variations with the two-point higher pincer. Because there is more room for the pincer player to move in, there are more variations we have to consider.

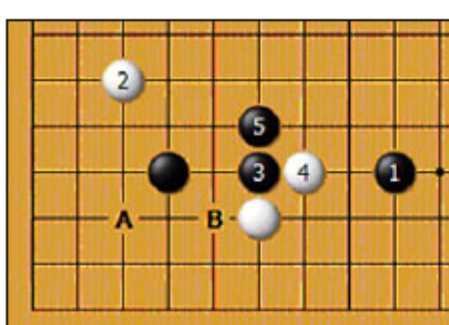


Diagram 1

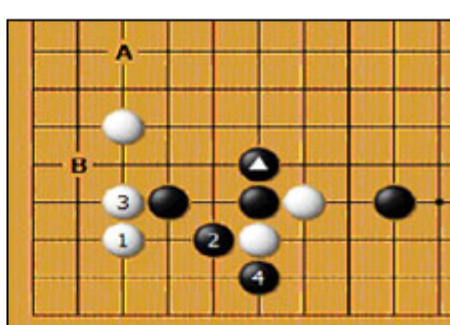


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

When White approaches again with 2, attaching at 3 is one of several options for Black. Even White has a few options, including bending with 4. Since we cannot study all the options at once, let's focus only on the sequences following Black 5. Even then, White has two choices at A and B.

Diagram 2

It is the simplest choice for White to come into the corner with 1. However, the outcome of the sequence up to Black 4 is not a desirable one because Black's squeezing with A, aiming at B with the help of the $\triangle$ -marked black stone, is a good follow-up move that restricts White's development on the left side in sente.

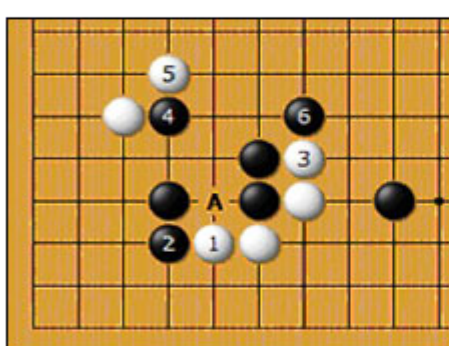


Diagram 3

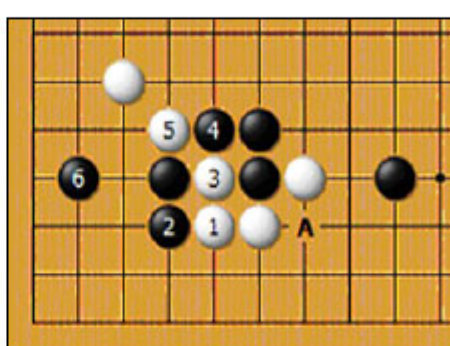


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

Therefore, White 1 here is more often played than the 3-3 invasion. When playing 2, Black may worry about White's coming out with A to cut. If so, see Diag.4. After White 3, Black has to play 4 before bending with 6 to avoid White's cutting with A.

Diagram 4

If White pushes with 3 and cuts at 5 right away, Black 6 is a good calm move. Because of the weakness at A, White cannot follow up with an aggressive fight afterward.

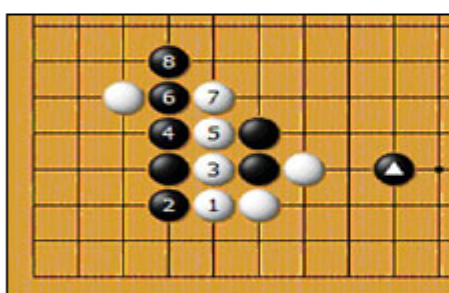


Diagram 5

Diagram 6 →

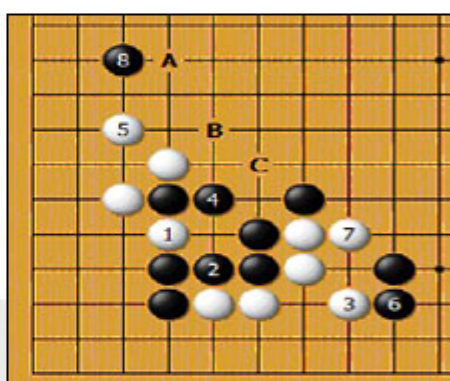


Diagram 5

To simply follow along White's push outward is too weak a strategy for Black. Up to 8, the $\triangle$ -marked black stone is isolated close to the opponent's strong wall, and the corner is not yet perfectly Black's territory.

Diagram 6

Continued from Diag.3, after Black's bend, White plays atari with 1 to reinforce his stones on the left side. If Black saves the stone in atari, White will cut the two black stones in the corner with 2, which is a great loss for Black. So, it is natural for Black to connect at 2, forcing White to take care of his weakness with 3. After Black saves the stone with 4, the sequence up to 8 is the most often played. White's reply to Black 8 may vary in several ways, and A, B, and C are the commonest ones. The fights following each move are too diverse and complicated to be explained here. It is sure that each of them can occupy more than a quarter of the board.

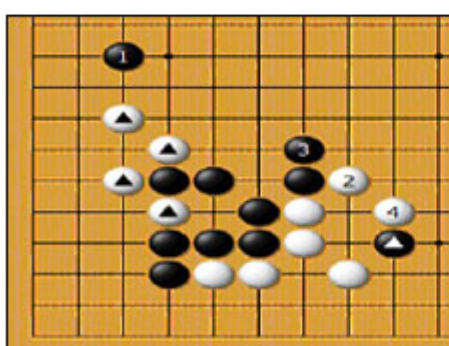


Diagram 7

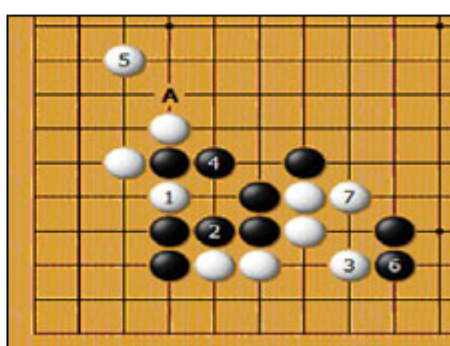


Diagram 8

Diagram 7

If Black omits Black 6 in Diag.6 and attacks the $\triangle$ -marked stones with 1 as shown, White 2 and 4 are the simplest and best answers. While the marked black stone on the lower side is totally controlled by White, the four white stones are so flexible as to escape easily from difficulty.

Diagram 8

Instead of White 5 in Diag.6, White can play a knight's move with 5. Still, Black has to block with 6 and continue a fight on the lower side. To build a wall first by attaching at A can be an option for Black's next move.

Diagram 9

It is too passive for Black to block with 1 instead of Black 6 in Diag.3. Black's territory in the corner looks small compared to White's outstanding wall in the center.

The writer is a baduk professor at Myongji University and a professional player of the game.

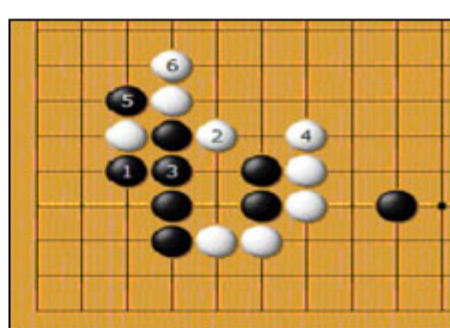


Diagram 9

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Lesson 148: Patterns with Double-Approach 4

By Nam Chi-hyung

I'm sure that you remember the saying, "After learning a joseki, forget it." It shows how difficult and ultimately meaningless it is to memorize all the joseki variations. The purpose of studying josekis has always been to learn the flow of proper reading and thinking. Since new variations arise all the time, it is literally impossible and also pointless to memorize all the newcomers. The variations introduced in a joseki book are not maxims, but possible suggestions that players should refer to. I will show you several variations in this lesson, but you should just study them, and then forget them.



Diagram 1

The sequence from White 1 to Black 4 is what we've studied in the previous lesson. I showed White's answer to Black 4 with A, and Black B, White's empty triangle at C, and Black's attack with D. White's bend at 5 intends to avoid this complicated fight.

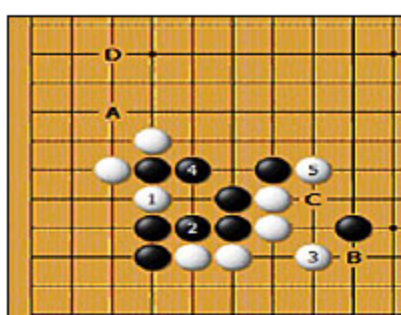


Diagram 1

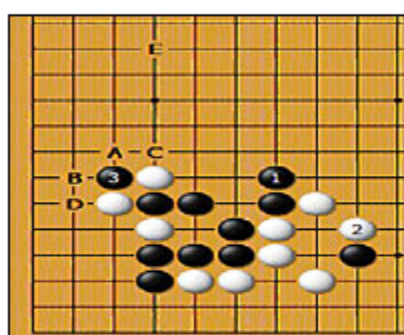


Diagram 2

Diagram 2

There is nothing difficult in the sequence up to Black 3. White got the influence on the lower side while Black got the corner territory. Later, White can clear up the left side with the sequence from A to E.

Diagram 3

If Black doesn't want White to make the situation simple by bending at A as we've seen in the last two diagrams, he can block with 1 before saving the stone in atari. If White comes out with B replying to Black 1, then the position will be the same as the one we've studied in the previous lesson, and Black can continue the attack on the left side.

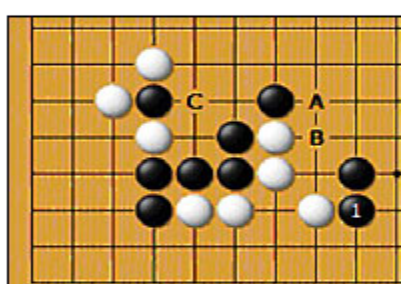


Diagram 3

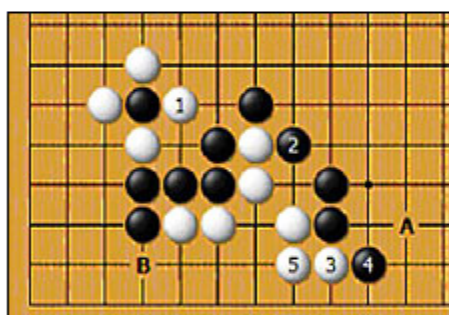


Diagram 4



Diagram 5

Diagram 4

White's capturing with 1 means that he doesn't want to be led by Black's initiative. Black's siege with 2 is natural since White ignored his attack. White 3 and 5 are to make a base for living on the side. Now, Black has two choices at A and B.

Diagram 5

Black 1 and 3 mean that he will let White live on the side. Up to 12, Black gained a pretty big influence toward the center. However, White's territory and influence are not so poor compared to Black's, since there is a weakness in Black's influence at A.

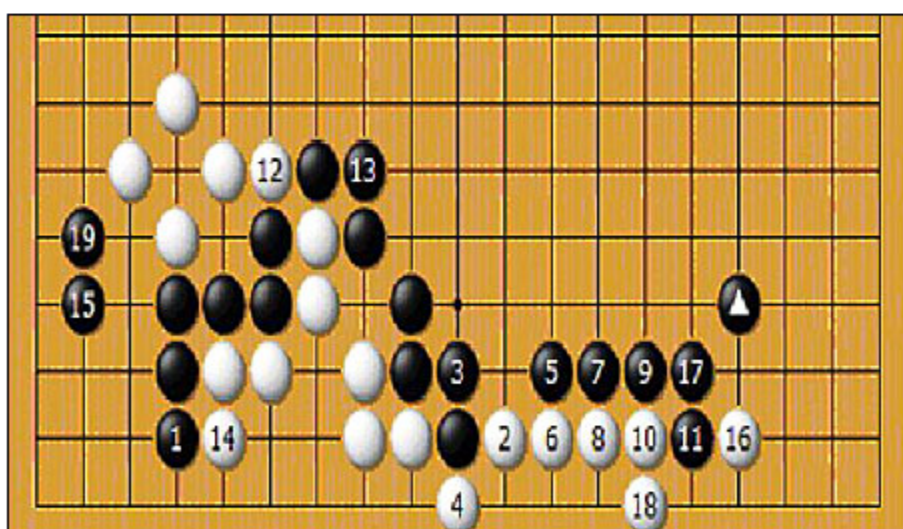


Diagram 6

Diagram 6

When there is an ally in the lower right corner, such as the $\triangle$ -marked black stone, Black can come down with 1, threatening White's base. It is impossible now for White to live inside, so he has to escape to the outside by attaching at 2. The sequence from Black 3 to 19 is inevitable and both the Black group on the lower side and the White group in the lower left corner are saved respectively with Black 18 and White 19. Although Black's influence in the center seems huge and the way of White's living on the side seems humble, the overall outcome is quite satisfactory for both players; it is White's turn now so he can reduce Black's influence with his next move.

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Lesson 150: Patterns with Double-Approach 6

By Nam Chi-hyung

It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the stronger a player is, the more skeptical he is also. A good player doesn't blindly follow what he has learned. He tries many moves he's never seen, or even heard of before, in order to find a better move. This of course happens with joseki variations.

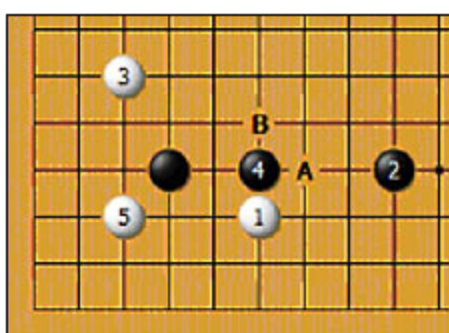


Diagram 1

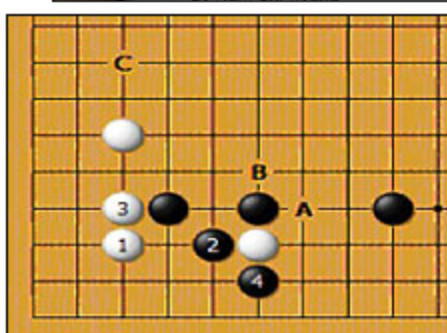


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

As the saying "when being attached, bend" goes, it is quite natural for White to bend with A when being attached by Black 4; as a result, most josekis with the double-approach start with White A and Black B here. However, one of the privileges of being a Baduk player is that there are no limits to your imagination on the board. And, one day, a player was curious as to what would happen if White went into the corner, omitting the A-B exchange.

Diagram 2

Black can think about blocking White's connection with 2, and the sequence up to 4 is easily expected. However, this result is unquestionably worse for Black, when compared to the exchange of White A and Black B, in which Black can squeeze the white group in the corner with C.

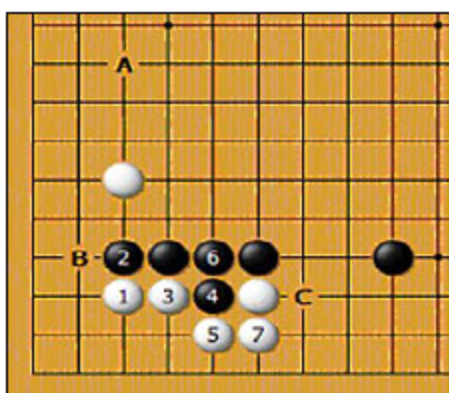
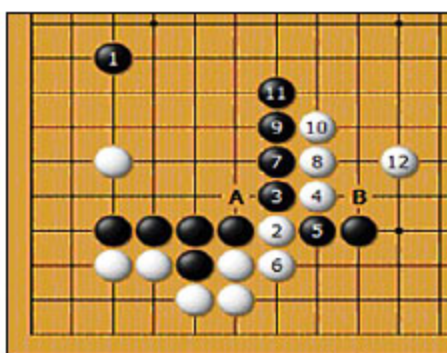


Diagram 3

Therefore, the right direction for Black to block is obviously Black 2 shown here. The sequence up to 7 is one possible variation following this blocking. A and B are usually considered for White's next move. Black can play 6 without wedging in with 4, which will be studied later. It is not good for White to extend with C instead of connecting at 7, because it allows White to cut at 7.



← Diagram 3

↑ Diagram 4

Diagram 4

Black 1 here is a move focusing on the territory and influence on the left side. White 2 and 4 are customary techniques to making a knot in Black's influence. After Black 7, the sequence from 8 to 12 shows an example of a possible fight. It is not good for Black to try to capture White 4 by giving atari with 8, instead of extending at 7. Whether the ladder is valid or not is not important this time, since White will cut at 7, forcing Black to take off White 4 with B, and then cut again with A.

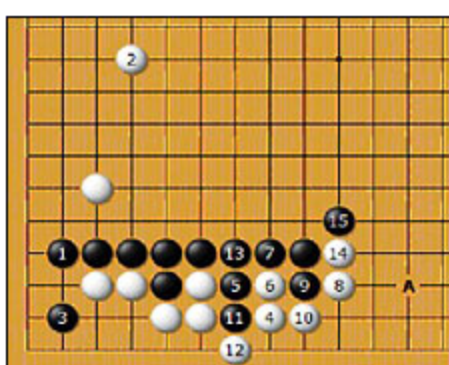


Diagram 5 ↑

Diagram 6 →

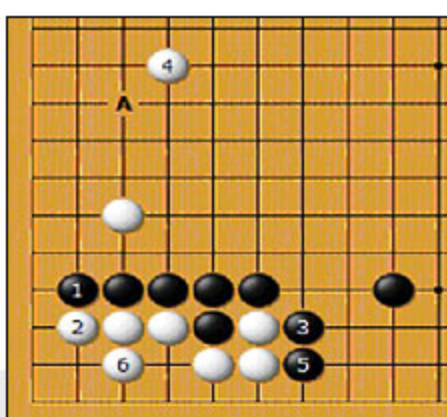


Diagram 5

When Black comes down with 1. White's extension with 2 is normal. Then, Black takes White's territory in the corner with 3 and a big struggle begins. Neither side has tangible territory and the outcome of the fight may decide the game. Instead of pushing with 11, it is also possible for Black to attack the white group with A.

Diagram 6

It is weak for White to answer Black 1 with 2. Black 3 is a good move for provoking a response from White, whether he directly answers it with 5 or ignores it to extend with 4. If 5, Black will go for A. Because of the exchanges Black 1-White 2, and Black 3-White 5, Black's influence on the left side becomes more powerful compared to the one in Diag.4. If White extends with 4 as shown here, then Black will block with 5 in sente, which is very satisfactory for him.

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Lesson 151: Patterns with Double-Approach 7

By Nam Chi-hyung

One of my students doesn't like to play handicapped games as Black. He insists that he cannot learn the opening theories and techniques if he lays down handicap stones. His claim is not completely wrong. However, there are many more things you should learn in Baduk, and if you cannot get a balanced result in the opening by bridging the gap of strength between you and your opponent with handicap stones, you will not understand how to play proper middle and end games.



The reason why you have to study so many josekis is somewhat similar to this. If you mess up the opening because you don't know a joseki variation, you will be hard pressed to proceed to a nice middle game. I hope this excuse for my tedious joseki lesson makes sense.

Diagram 1

Instead of wedging in at 2, Black can just connect with 1. After White connects with 2, Black 3 is the common move. You may remember you saw a descending move at A for White's answer in a similar situation. Yes, there is a pincer joseki where White comes down with A. In this case, however, to play A leaves Black's influence stronger as the black group has one more liberty. So, if A, Black will happily go to B.

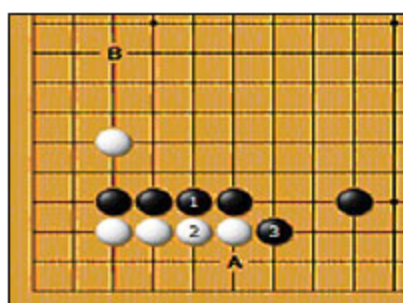


Diagram 1

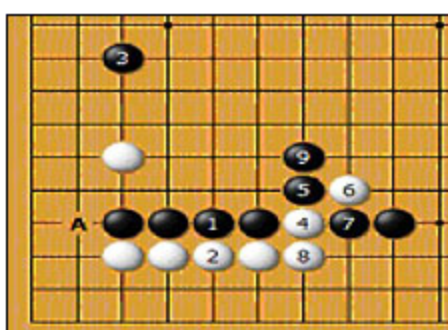


Diagram 2

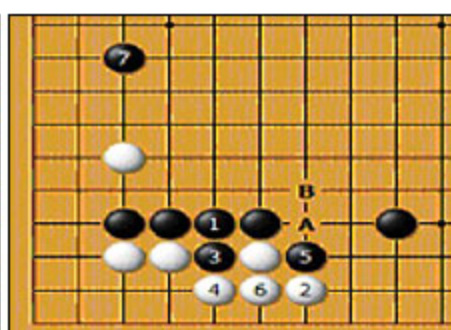


Diagram 3

Diagram 2

Why Black 3 in Diag.1 is commonly played can be guessed through a simple comparison. If Black goes to 3, the sequence up to 9 is expected. However, this time, it is not such a strong move for Black to come down with A as it was in the situation with Black's wedging in at 2.

Diagram 3

It is worse for White to play 2 than to descend at 6. Through the sequence from 3 to 6, Black builds a much stronger wall than before. Now the exchange of A and B cannot hurt the power of the wall.

Diagram 4

After Black's bend at 3, it is most common for White to extend with 4. During the sequence from 5 to 9, White becomes squeezed in the corner and Black's influence in the center and the lower side becomes quite big; nevertheless, White can still be content with the result, because he managed to swiftly occupy important points such as 4 and 10. White's group in the corner is alive. Please verify this yourself.

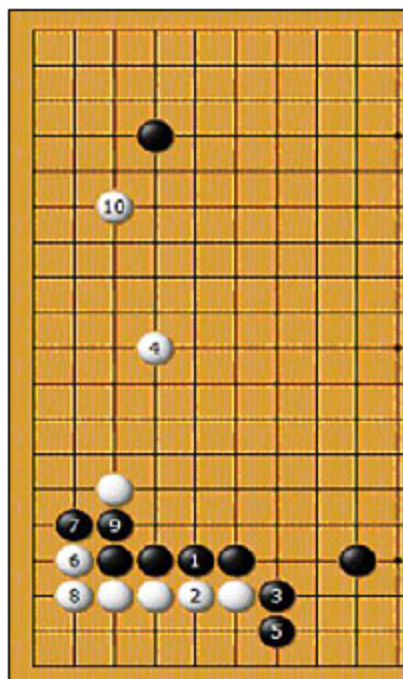


Diagram 4

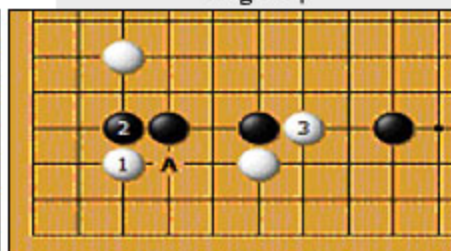
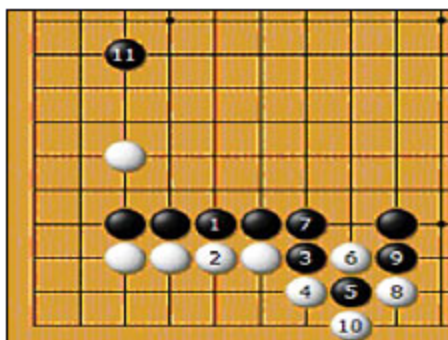


Diagram 6

← Diagram 5

Diagram 5

If White goes for the tangible profit rather than occupying good positions for the future, he can answer with 4 against Black 3. However, the difference in result between this diagram and Diag.3 is not that big for White, and I don't recommend it so much.

Diagram 6

We've seen what happens when White answers with A against Black 2. But, as mentioned before, every move should be examined with a skeptical mind. What will occur if White bends with 3 instead of simply playing A? That is the topic of the next lesson.

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Lesson 152: Patterns with Double-Approach 8

By Nam Chi-hyung

What if your opponent plays a move that you don't already know? Well, this is a pretty silly question because most of the moves played on the Baduk board have never been played before. Lee Chang-ho 9-dan, the best player in the world, often hesitates before answering when asked about where he will play next, saying "I've never played in this way, so I have to think about it some more." His answer is not a humble gesture, but a true confession. It is impossible to be omniscient in front of the Baduk board, even for the world's top player. Then, what must we do? Think more.



Diagram 1

We've learned the variations that may occur when White plays A against Black's blocking with 3. However, White can bend at 4, instead of seeking for a life in the corner right away with playing A. Black can consider as his next move, A or B for locking the corner which White abandoned, or C, obeying the saying "when the opponent bends, extend."

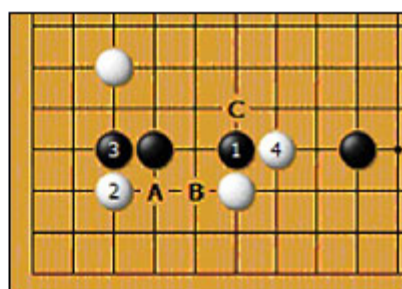


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

If Black extends as the saying goes, White will return with 2 to save the corner. Three to 7 is a sequence easily anticipated after White 2, and White gets the profit in the corner while Black builds an influence toward the center. Black's problem is that the influence can be checked by White 8 with no trouble. Moreover, if Black occupies the side with 8 instead of blocking with 7, White will push up with 7, which reduces Black's influence and isolates the Δ -marked black stone as well. Therefore, C in Diag.1 is ruled out.

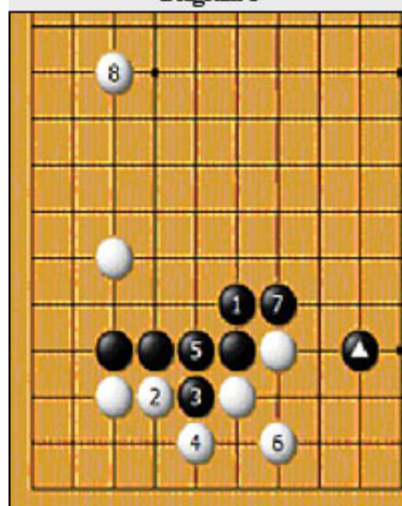


Diagram 2

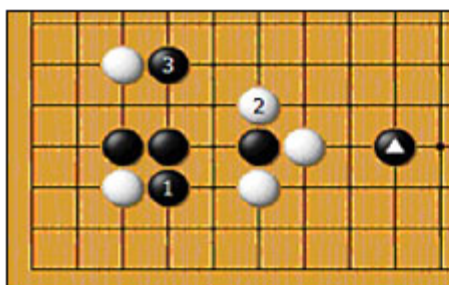


Diagram 3

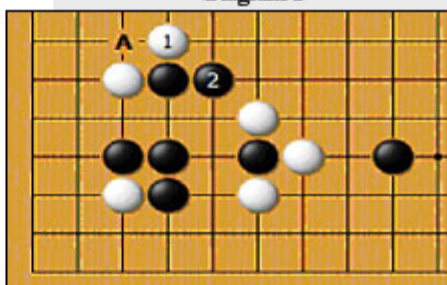


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

If Black secures the corner with 1, White will play atari with 2. It is insignificant for Black to save the stone in atari, and the shape after the saving is not good either. Because of the Δ -marked stone pressing the white group in the lower side, it is far better for Black to split White into two by attacking at 3 and keeping on the attack.

Diagram 4

It is naive for White to bend with 1, following the saying "when being attached, bend." Owing to the 1-2 exchange, the white stones on the left side now reveal vulnerability at A, and the ones on the lower side become weaker as well.

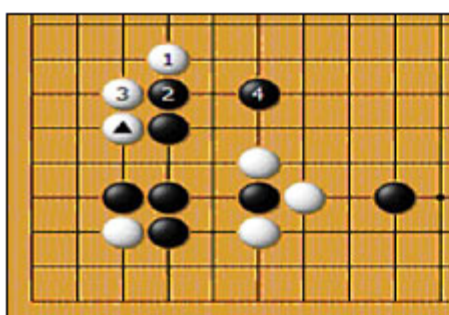


Diagram 5

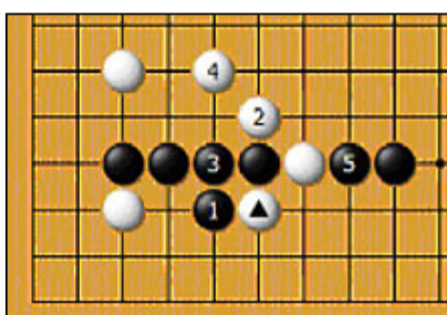


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

When your opponent is much stronger than you, it's better not to come too close to him. White 1 is quite a clever move in this sense. Of course, Black can capture the Δ -marked white stone by bending at 3, but then White will cut at 2 and limit Black's shape in the corner through the sacrifice of the cut stone. Therefore, the best choice for Black is to keep attacking the white group on the lower side with 2 and 4. I'll leave the management of the following fights to you.

Diagram 6

For White to give an atari with 2 when Black blocks with 1 may be a pleasant move to play, but it isn't very profitable. Black can capture the Δ -marked white stone thanks to the good move on 5, and Black's territory on the side is pretty big.

Diagram 7

It is good for White to force Black to protect the corner with 3 by making a tiger's mouth with 2, before giving atari with 4. Since it becomes unimportant to save the stone in atari, Black will try to separate White into two with 5 and 7. Unlike in Diag.4, now White 6 and 8 are okay because the white stones on the lower side can easily escape with A.

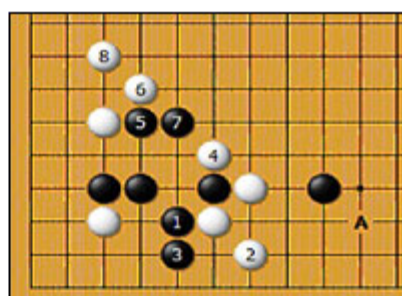


Diagram 7

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Lesson 153: Baduk in Modern China (1)

By Nam Chi-hyung

Since the oldest records and artifacts related to Baduk are found in China, and the legendary tales of the origin of the game all involve Chinese emperors, most scholars agree that Baduk originated in China.

Accordingly, it would be a huge task to reduce the long history of Baduk in ancient China to a brief summary. In contrast, modern Chinese Baduk is relatively young, dating back only to the birth of the People's Republic. This lesson will be devoted to a synopsis of the history of modern Chinese Baduk.

Compared to the splendid past, the Chinese Baduk scene of the first half of the 20th century is not so well-known. We know the famous Wu Qingwan went to Japan in order to continue studying the game in the 1920s, but his career developed mostly in Japan rather than in his homeland. There were innumerable civil and foreign conflicts during these turbulent, war-torn years, and it is easy to imagine that the Chinese people had more urgent needs to take care of than a game like Baduk.

The modern 'dan' concept, replacing the ancient 9-step rank 'pin', was introduced in the 1950s after the war between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party came to an end. Initially, the presentation of the dan level was done privately among the active players. In 1957, the first National Individual Baduk Tournament was played, and the top ranked players of this tournament were sent as the Chinese national team for the China-Japan Super Competition. Although the National Individual Baduk Tournament was not held during the years of the Cultural Revolution, it was revived at the end of the 1970s, and this year marks its 40th anniversary.

The Chinese Baduk Association was first established in 1962 in Hefei, Anhui, and it started to officially assign dan levels from 1 to 7 to strong players. However, when the Party abolished all ranks in all societies in 1964, even in the army, because everybody should be equal, the just-begun dan system was also discarded. The Cultural Revolution followed not long after.

During the Revolution, most of the cultural relics of ancient China were rejected, including Baduk, and even a world-class player like Nie Weiping (1952~) was not allowed to maintain his career but was put to work as a laborer. Because countless historical sites, buildings and artifacts were destroyed during this period, it is thought that many precious Baduk boards, stones, documents, and records about the game, carefully hoarded till then, were also damaged and lost.

The official Chinese system of selecting and ranking the national players, which continues today, was reinstated back in 1982. At that time, there were 10 strongest players who were national representatives. The new association gave the 10 players dan levels; Chun Jude (1944~), Wu Songsung (1945~2007), and Nie Weiping were given 9-dan, and the others 6-dan and 7-dan. After that, the association selected 114 more players and gave them dan levels from 1 to 7 by comparing their strengths with those of the 10 original players.

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Lesson 154: Baduk in Modern China 2



By Nam Chi-hyung

Baduk is officially recognized as a sport in China, so the Chinese Baduk Association has been under the purview of the Sports Ministry from its inception. As a result, a person who is selected as a player of the association, namely a professional, has many privileges guaranteed by the government, such as entering university through a special process. Of course, as you

may guess, the competition to become a professional is quite intense.

The official qualification process for professional Baduk players in China began in 1988, just 20 years ago. Until 1999, there was only one annual qualification tournament, and no settled number for those qualifying each year. In the first year, 16 players passed the test; only 7 succeeded in 1995. As the competition got harder, the association felt the need to fix the number to make the process clearer, and decided on 20 players a year starting in 2000, 18 males and 2 females.

There is a very strict age limit to become a professional in China, 17 for the male players and 20 for the female players. The logic behind having an age limit is that the younger a player, the more potential he or she has of becoming an even better player. Thanks to this policy, the Chinese rookies have been getting stronger each year. However, there is also a negative side effect, where the young applicants do not have time for a regular school education, the same as Korean players of a similar age. Nevertheless, the number of applicants is increasing every year, and nowadays, more than 500 strong youngsters apply for the qualification tournament. Concerned about older applicants lying about their age, the association has even started measuring the growth plates in the applicants' bones to verify their accurate age.

It is also difficult to be promoted to a higher level. For example, a player has to win 75% out of more than 20 games in the promotion tournament which is held once a year in order to be promoted to 9-dan from 8-dan, and no one has succeeded since 2003. Of course, that is not only because winning 75% of the games is difficult, but also because there is no monetary compensation for the games played in the promotion tournament. In short, high dan players, who are usually famous and paid well, don't want to participate in the tournament. For this reason, this kind of tournament was abolished in Korea about 10 years ago, and now we have a different system. Although rare, it is possible to advance 2 dans at once when a player wins an international tournament.

Because making money is the key factor for professional players, perhaps being a national team member is more important than just being a higher dan player. Only about 50 players can be national team members at a time, and the rewards are quite substantial. The Chinese Baduk League, big enough to make Korean top players such as Lee Changho and Lee Sedol join, is another lucrative chance for the top players. The League was started in 2000, and has gotten bigger every year. About 70 players are now playing in the major league.

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Lesson 155: The Advanced Haengma 1

By Nam Chi-hyung

“Haengma” is perhaps the only Korean Baduk term which is widely accepted by the English-speaking Baduk players. It is often mistakenly compared to the Japanese concept “tesuji,” which means a brilliant move in a certain shape. When you are talking about a specific move fit for a certain situation, there is another Korean Baduk term “maek,” which has almost the same meaning as the Japanese tesuji.



In contrast, the moves referred to as haengma are more general. The basic haengma is well explained in proverbs such as “when being attached, bend,” “cut across a knight’s move,” etc. Since we’ve learned many of those basics already, let’s study some that are a bit more sophisticated.

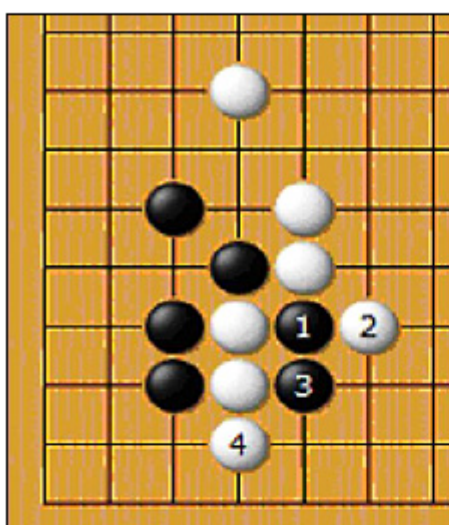


Diagram 1

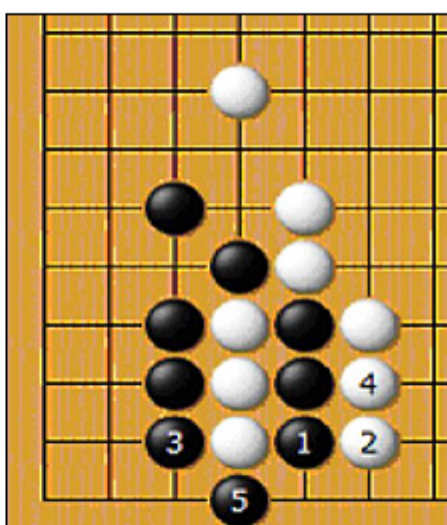


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

White 4 is an example of the haengma described by the proverb, “add a stone and sacrifice both” when you have stones in atari on the 3rd line. The question at hand is Black’s correct answer to White 4. This kind of haengma is not taught by proverbs, but still deserves to be learned.

Diagram 2

If Black simply blocks with 1, it allows White to seal up the outside in sente as shown. This is why White’s sacrifice with 4 in Diag.1 is a good move.

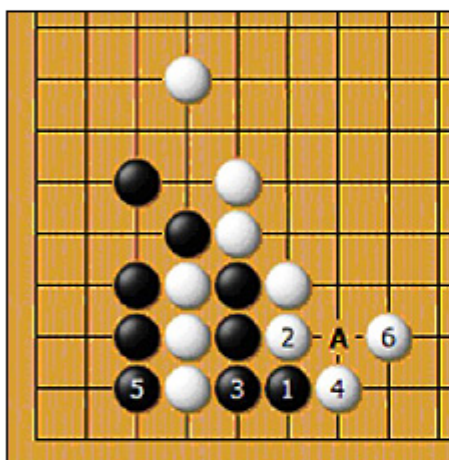


Diagram 3

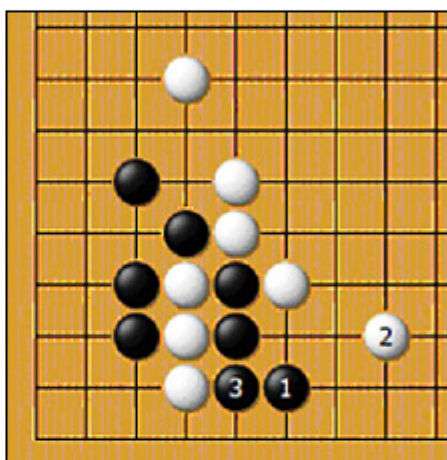


Diagram 4

Diagram 3

In this case, the diagonal move with 1 is the haengma for Black. If White wants to make an influence as in Diag.2, now he has to spend one more move at 6 to defend the cutting point at A.

Diagram 4

Therefore, White must not be fooled as in Diag.3, but play 2 as here, which is the haengma for White. Owing to this haengma, White can get a sente. However, the result here is far better for Black than the one in Diag.2. Black is now able to play a diagonal haengma with 1.

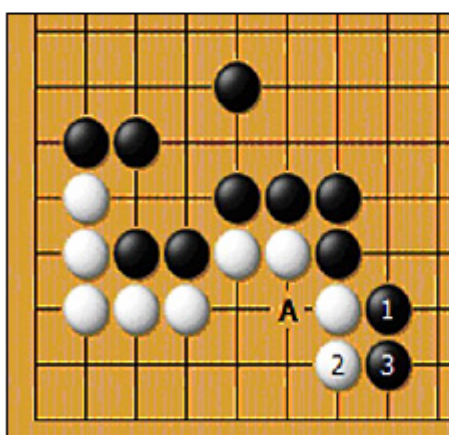


Diagram 5

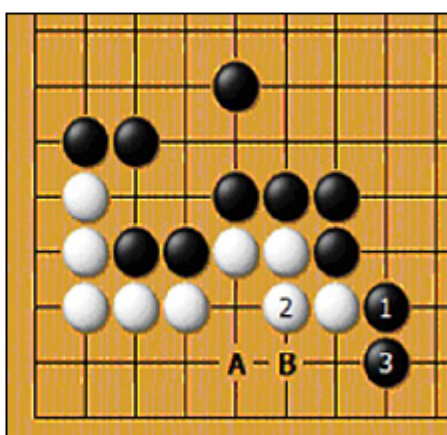


Diagram 6

Diagram 5

Perhaps this one is too easy for you. The question is what is the correct answer against Black 1? Coming down with 2 is obviously not good for White, because he has to add one more move to defend the weakness at A after Black 3.

Diagram 6

To connect at 2 is just a bit better than the descent of Diag.5, since White can get a sente at least. But, it is not good enough yet because the weaknesses A and B still remain for White.

Diagram 7

The haengma for White is to play a tiger’s mouth with 1, which protects the cutting point at B in sente. If Black wants to get a sente and go elsewhere, he can give an atari with A, forcing White to connect at B. However, it will leave weaknesses in Black’s shape, such as C, and that is why White 1 is the haengma.

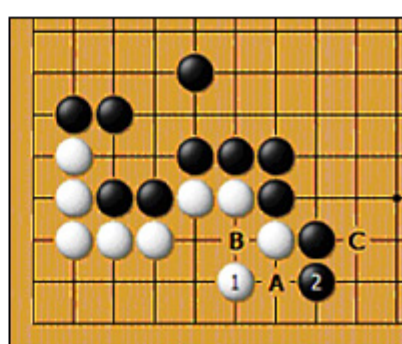


Diagram 7

I mentioned before that there is no proverb teaching us the two haengmas we’ve learned in this lesson, but maybe we can make one ourselves.

Because White 1 in Diag.7 can also be referred to as a diagonal move, not a tiger’s mouth, what about ‘play a diagonal on the second line to create weaknesses in the opponent’s shape?’

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Lesson 156: The Advanced Haengma 2

By Nam Chi-hyung

You may feel somewhat nervous about learning haengmas if you think you have to memorize them. However, you don't need to memorize all of them one by one. Like when learning joseki, learning about haengma will help you develop the sense to recognize the correct position of stones. In addition, perhaps you've already experienced many haengmas when you went through the difficult process of memorizing josekis. Let's see how many you can recall.



Diagram 1

The sequence from 1 to 6 is taken from a two-space high pincer joseki. When Black covers the white stone in the corner with a knight's move at 3, White pushes up with 4 and cuts with 6. The question is Black's next move.

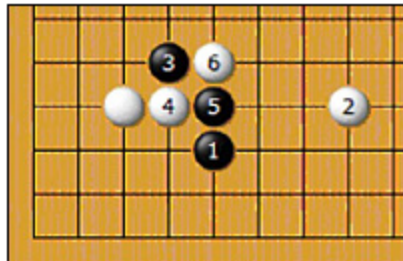


Diagram 1

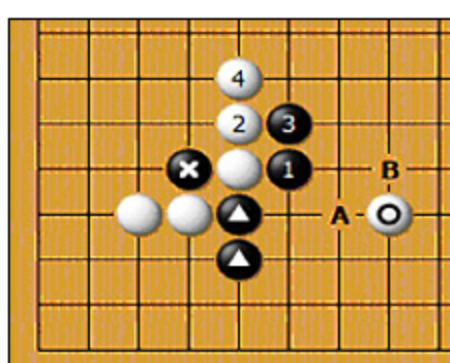


Diagram 2

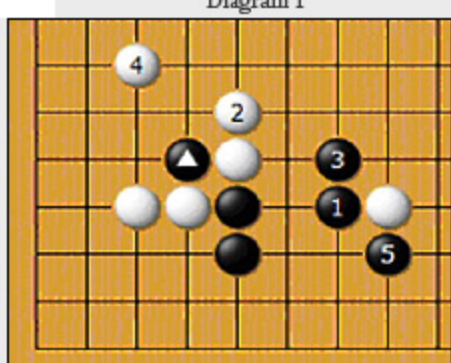


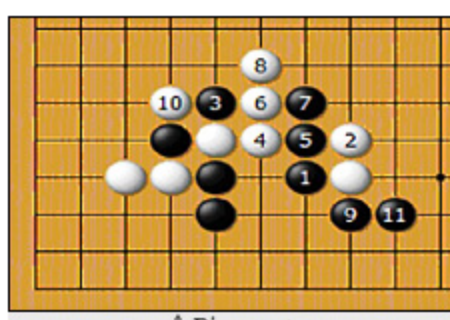
Diagram 3

Diagram 2

Because the two $\triangle$ -marked stones are bigger than the x-marked one, it's reasonable to do something on the lower side. However, to give an atari with 1 and push with 3 is an immature play. It doesn't become a threat to the o-marked white stone, but just helps White to develop the left side. To play A instead of pushing with 3, letting White to extend with B, isn't any good after Black makes the naive atari with 1.

Diagram 3

The haengma in this situation is the attachment of Black 1. The sequence up to 5, White getting the left side including the $\triangle$ -marked black stone, while Black has an influence on the lower side, is a joseki.



↑ Diagram 4

→ Diagram 5

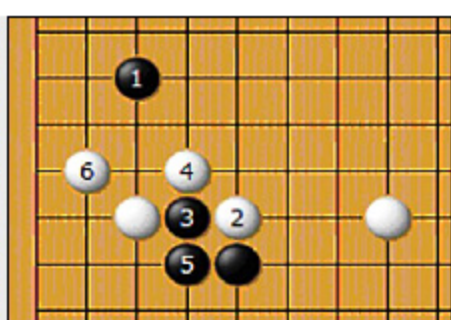


Diagram 4

If White extends on the lower side with 2 instead of on the left side as in Diag.3, Black 3, giving atari from the farther side, is another haengma. After forcing White to answer up to 8, Black can build a better influence on the lower side up to 11.

Diagram 5

This is another situation taken from a two-space high pincer joseki. Instead of jumping out from the lower side, Black chooses to squeeze the white stone in the corner with 1. Well, after White 6, what should Black do? Please remind yourself of what you just learned.

Diagram 6

If you guessed the attachment of Black 1 here, you are my best student! Obviously to give an atari with A is out of the question for the same reason why Black's atari in Diag.2 is bad. After Black 1, White extends with 2, and Black can go out toward the center and separate White into two groups as well.

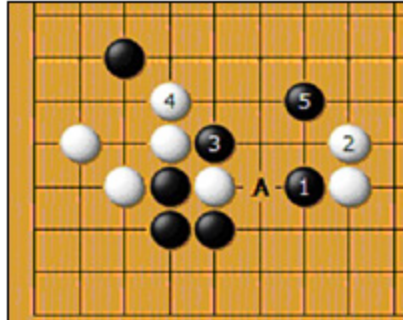


Diagram 6

Diagram 7

If White doesn't allow Black to advance to the center but blocks with 2 and 4, Black will make a base with 5, forcing White to protect a cutting point with 6 and then go to the left side with 7.

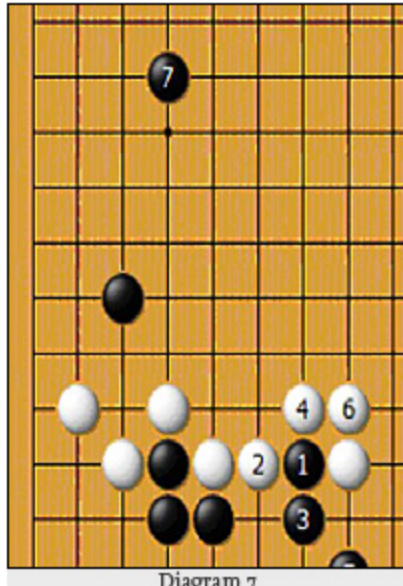


Diagram 7

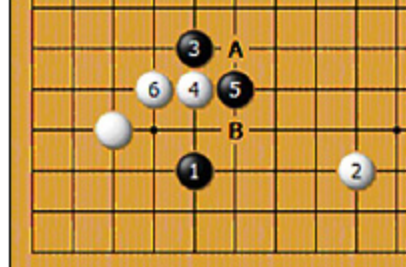


Diagram 8

Diagram 8

This is a situation taken from a three-space pincer joseki. White 4 and 6 make two weaknesses at A and B, and Black's job is to defend both of them at the same time. To play either of the two cutting points is unsatisfactory for Black, as it leaves the other one vulnerable.

Diagram 9

As you've learned, to attach with 1 is the answer again. If White cuts at 2, Black will develop the lower sides with 3 and 5, letting White do the same thing with 4.

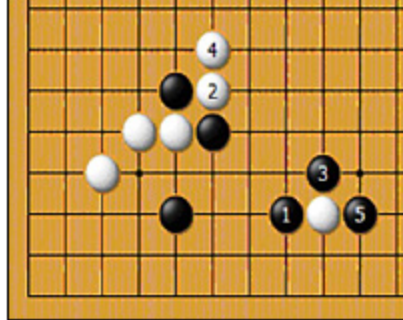


Diagram 9

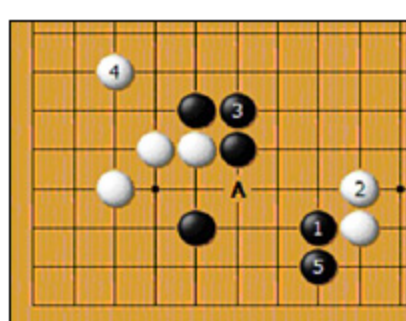


Diagram 10

Diagram 10

If White extends with 2 in order not to give the lower side to Black, Black can connect at 3, since the cutting point at A is protected by the 1-2 exchange.

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Lesson 157: Advanced Haengma 3

By Nam Chi-hyung

Finding an appropriate move when playing Baduk depends a lot on the position of the stones. In certain cases, you don't even need to read what would come, because the position itself decides the consequences. Haengma is nothing more than a theory about those frequently-occurring positions so that you can recognize and consider them. The one we're going to learn in this lesson is the "double-bend."

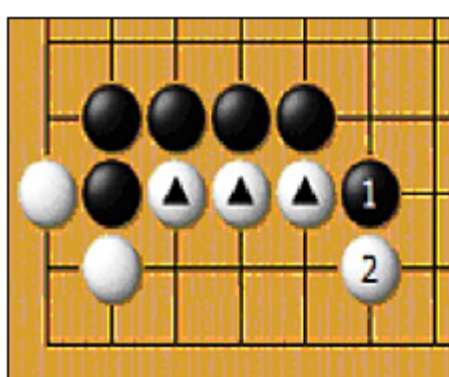


Diagram 1

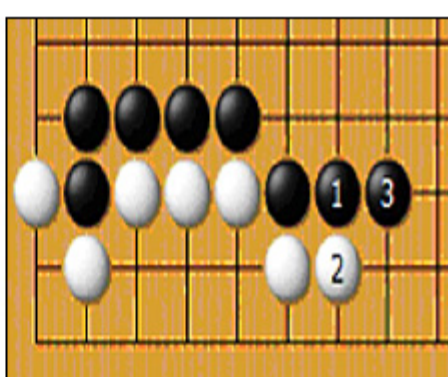


Diagram 2

Diagram 1

Black 1 is a move according to the proverb "hit the head of three stones" and White 2 is the usual bend against it. The question is, what should be Black's next move? Please take into account the fact that the three ▲-marked white stones have weaknesses.

Diagram 2

It is too meek for Black to extend with 1. It lets White live in the corner with a decent-sized territory, and the lower side also remains without an owner.

Diagram 3

The answer is to bend once again with 1, namely the "double-bend." To give an atari with White 2 is not for capturing Black 1 with A, which is actually impossible because of the weaknesses at B and C, but for leaving the follow-up of saving White 2 when the ladder is favorable for White. Anyway, up to 5, Black succeeds in blocking White inside the corner and building influences on both the left and lower sides.

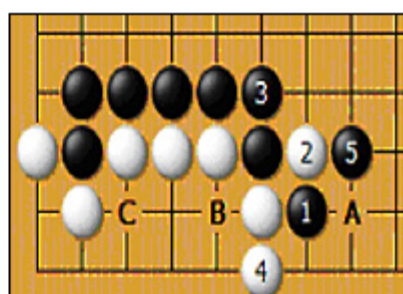


Diagram 3

Diagram 4

It is almost the same situation as the one in Diag.1 and I bet you can find the answer with no trouble. To connect with A is not the answer because it allows White to have the corner by descending with B. To descend with C is even worse than A, as it leaves a cutting point at A after White secures the corner with B.

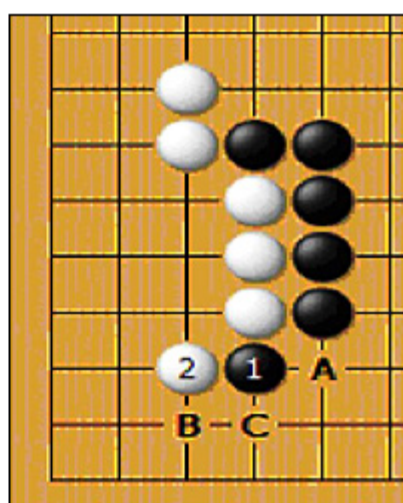


Diagram 4

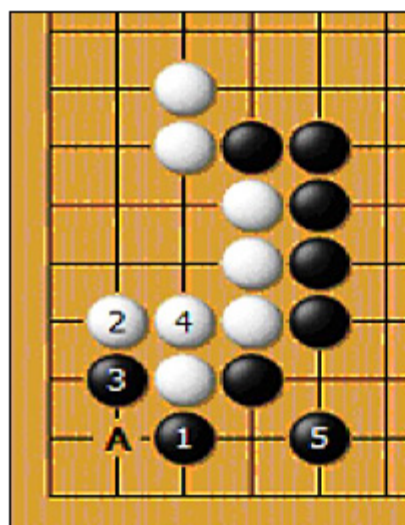


Diagram 5

Diagram 5

Of course, the answer is the double-bend with 1. You can easily see the difference between the result up to 5 here and the ones considered above. White 2 is the move we learned in Lesson 155, "play a diagonal on the second line to create weaknesses in the opponent's shape," which means A in this case.

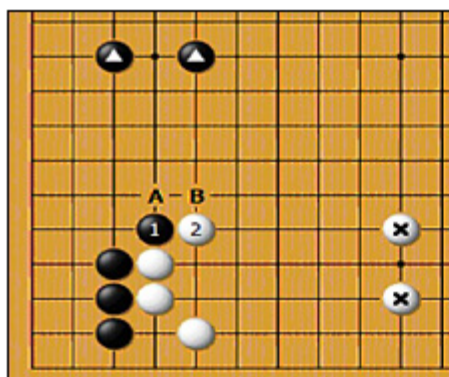


Diagram 6

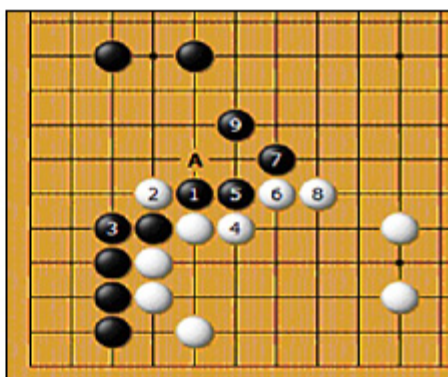


Diagram 7

Diagram 6

Both Black and White want to make a bigger framework on both left and the lower sides, since they have the marked stones supporting the idea. So, Black bends with 1 and White counter-bends against it. As you may guess, to extend at A is not good as it will be pushed up by White 2. Then, what's Black's next move?

Diagram 7

Once again, the double-bend is the answer. Up to 9, Black succeeds in enlarging his own territory while reducing the opponent's. In the sequence, the atari with White 2 is the same idea as the one in Diag.3, namely leaving a follow-up. By the way, it is not good for White to give another atari with 5 instead of 4 and let Black come out with A, since it helps Black to have a sente. White has to come back to 4 in order to defend the weakness.

I believe now you have become aware of the use of the double-bend. It is a haengma like the knight's move, diagonal, and so on, but a bit more technically complicated. Let me make a simple catchphrase. What about "bend, and then bend again!"

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